



GROSZ

George Grosz



Cover: *I Was Always Present*. 1936. Ink.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.

Above: Drawing from sketchbook. 1950.

GEORGE GROSZ

BY JOHN I. H. BAUR

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THE PIT. 1946. Oil. $60\frac{1}{4} \times 37\frac{1}{4}$. Roland P. Murdock Collection, Wichita Art Museum.

GEORGE GROSZ

“As you know from my book I have tried very hard to become an American—but of course it is never possible to do so completely.” Like Henry James in England, George Grosz in America has reached at last a working agreement between the heritage of his birth and the culture of his adopted country. Unlike most of the famous expatriates brought here by war and political convulsions abroad, Grosz has embraced America with a whole heart and sought to burn all his bridges to the past. This has brought down on his head artistic criticism for having abandoned the social satire which made his reputation in Germany, as well as a certain amount of ridicule (in Richard Boyer’s *New Yorker* “profile,” for instance) because of his attempts to pattern himself on a foreigner’s notion of the typical American. But today the transitional phase of Grosz’s life which provoked these reactions is over. After twenty-two years here, America is a familiar reality in which he can take part emotionally as well as by citizenship. At the same time, he has gradually come to accept his German background and his years in Europe, realizing that they cannot be erased, as he once sought to do, by a simple act of will. The conflict between two cultures still makes Grosz its battlefield but there is an artistic advantage and even a kind of moral victory in acknowledging the conflict as a permanent condition of life. He is no longer compelled either to paint programmatically “American” pictures or to turn back to a purely “German” art—neither of which is actually a possible alternative. The only solution, as Grosz has discovered, is a fusion which enriches his art from both sides. Yet this has been an extraordinarily difficult task, particularly in the case of a man whose personality is full of contradictions and whose involvement in both German and American culture is complex. Grosz has not always succeeded, but during the last eighteen years or so there have come from his easel an increasing number of paintings which, despite recognizable elements from both the old world and the new, rise above nationality to a broader human significance.

At one time this study bore the provisional title *George Grosz in America*, and it is still concerned chiefly with his work done here. But no man’s maturity can be divorced entirely from his youth—perhaps least of all Grosz’s. The great change that occurred in his art when he reached America was as much a reaction against his German past as it was a response to his new environment. And when that reaction was over, his painting was again and more positively affected by Teutonic tradition—superficially by a nostalgia for the things that had seemed good in his youth and, more profoundly, by a new sense



SKETCHBOOK. c. 1906.

of kinship with the romantic and mystical strain in the north European mind. Plainly one cannot ignore the German years even though they have already been discussed in numerous articles and books, including the artist's own autobiography, *A Little Yes and a Big No.*

Like most good painters, Grosz drew and sketched with unusual facility from early childhood and has even preserved a few examples, such as the spirited battle scene reproduced, done when he was about twelve. In the small Pomeranian town of Stolp where his boyhood was spent, except for two interludes in Berlin, there were not many opportunities for studying art, but he copied the wonderful *Max und Moritz* illustrations of Wilhelm Busch and went briefly to a drawing class conducted by the local decorator, Grot. The knights and castles, the American Indians and frontiersmen on the prairie (he had read Cooper), which he drew in profusion were perhaps only the natural choice of a boy in his early 'teens, but they also forecast the romantic imagination that was to emerge, after long suppression, in some of his American canvases.

Despite his passion for drawing, Grosz did not yet consider an artist's career. Born of Prussian parents, raised in the Prussian state at its most militaristic, living for much of his youth in an officers' club of the Count Blücher Hussars, which his mother managed after his father's death in 1900, Grosz shared the nearly universal ambition of German youth for a military career as an officer. The discipline and standards of his school at Stolp were aimed exclusively in this direction, and it was only after he had been expelled for attacking a teacher who had struck him that Grosz determined to become a painter. In this decision Herr Papst, the school's drawing teacher, was his one ally. It was he who overcame Frau Grosz's conservative distrust and who volunteered to train his disgraced pupil for entrance examinations at the Royal Saxon Academy of the Fine Arts in Dresden. During the years 1908–09 he gave Grosz a rigorous course in rendering the usual plaster casts and in drawing the forms and textures of commonplace objects like old shoes and baskets. Today Grosz has a special fondness for his studies of the latter because his grandfather was a basket weaver in Finsterwalde, from whom he feels that he inherited the joy

of working with his hands. Most of the other drawings have long since disappeared but several are reproduced in a series of reminiscent articles which he wrote for the magazine *Kunst und Künstler* (October–December, 1930).

In 1909 the sixteen-year-old boy, accompanied by his aunt, set out for Dresden to take his entrance examinations. Beset by self-doubt and distracted by the charms of Fräulein Kühling, his landlord's daughter, he nevertheless managed to produce a satisfactory copy of Nero's plaster head and was accepted. To husband his small funds he took a more spartan room with a printer at fifteen marks a month and embarked on the laborious studies of a typical academy, working chiefly under Professors Richard Müller and Osmar Schindler as well as with Robert Sterl and Raphael Wehle. There were the usual long hours of drawing from plaster casts, varied twice a month by work from living models and interspersed with lectures on anatomy and perspective. No hint of Dresden's modern movement, *Die Brücke*, was permitted to penetrate the school's solid walls of tradition where Professor Müller, a profane and picturesque academician, attacked all modernism as meaningless smears of offal. Nevertheless, Müller was not

CAFÉ. 1909. Pencil. $9\frac{3}{8} \times 9$. Associated American Artists Galleries.





AFTER IT WAS OVER THEY PLAYED CARDS. 1917. Pen and ink.
9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 12. Associated American Artists Galleries.

without a certain Wagnerian romanticism apparent in such paintings as his *Todeskampf*, a gruesome struggle between a skeleton and a nude man, and he once gave the young Grosz a prize for an imaginative drawing of death. From his friendship with other students, particularly a moody Norwegian named Kittelson, Grosz learned much that was not taught in the Academy. Kittelson introduced him to the strange paintings of Edvard Munch and stimulated him to more serious reading, especially the fantastic tales of Gustav Meyrink. "Demoniacal writing has always enticed me," he wrote in his autobiography, but added, "An innate skepticism and incredulity . . . a tendency toward the actual facts kept bringing me back to prosaic every-day living." Already there were emerging two sides of Grosz's character which were to ramify and collide in his later work.

Outside of class Grosz experimented with many styles, modelling himself on a variety of popular and now largely forgotten illustrators such as Hermann Vogel-Plauen or the poster designer Julius Klinger. But the most persistent influence was the highly patterned *linienstil*, or line-style, of Bruno Paul and other cartoonists whose work appeared regularly in *Simplizissimus*—a kind of mannered modernization of the earlier *Jugendstil* and *art nouveau*. Eager to make money in his new profession, Grosz was producing accomplished though quite unoriginal cartoons, like *Café*, in *linienstil* as early as 1909, when he was still only sixteen. A year later he triumphantly made his first sale of such a drawing to *Ulk*, a supplement of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and wrote his mother that she need have no

FURLOUGH. 1917. Watercolor. 18 $\frac{1}{4}$
x 13 $\frac{5}{8}$. Associated American Artists
Galleries.



further worries, he was now a full-fledged artist. With the money he bought himself a pair of American patent leather shoes, sharply pointed. And for another year or two he continued to draw and sell work in this manner, sometimes filling in the lines with areas of flat color.

"I was a friendlier person then than I am today," Grosz wrote later, "so that the world seemed friendlier to me. . . . Now I know that I experienced the end of a world whose last few years were my least conscious ones and, therefore, the happiest years of my life. My thoughts were influenced by daydreaming idealists who often discussed the future state as conceived by Bebel, the acknowledged leader of the Social Democratic party. . . [But] my own hopes never lay with the masses. . . . I lived high up in an attic studio, closer to the stars, the moon and the birds than to people. . . . I was conscious only of myself. I, George Grosz, wanted to forge ahead, to attain my goal by my own efforts. Yes, such was my simple philosophy of life, which is probably the working creed of all embryonic artists."

In the spring of 1911 Grosz received his diploma and left Dresden to continue his studies at the Royal Arts and Crafts School in Berlin, where he was awarded a scholarship. There he studied under Emil Orlik, a man of wider culture and sympathies than the

Dresden teachers. Orlik had been in Japan and introduced his students to Japanese art; Pascin and Hodler visited his studio. With Grosz, however, he was strict, sensing perhaps the danger of his too great facility in copying the styles of others. At Orlik's suggestion, he returned to nature—not to the casts and models of the school but to the streets and parks and people of the city. With his friend Herbert Fiedler he had his first taste of bohemian life, spending much time in the cheaper cafés and night spots. Everywhere he went a small notebook accompanied him, as it has ever since, and he sketched constantly, trying to forget style and to capture as economically as possible the life around him. There was still little individuality in these drawings but they gave him a quick skill of eye and hand that proved invaluable. At the same time he experimented with his first oil-painting in the studio which he and Fiedler shared. In this he was virtually self-taught, since neither at Dresden nor in Orlik's class was he permitted to work in the oil medium.

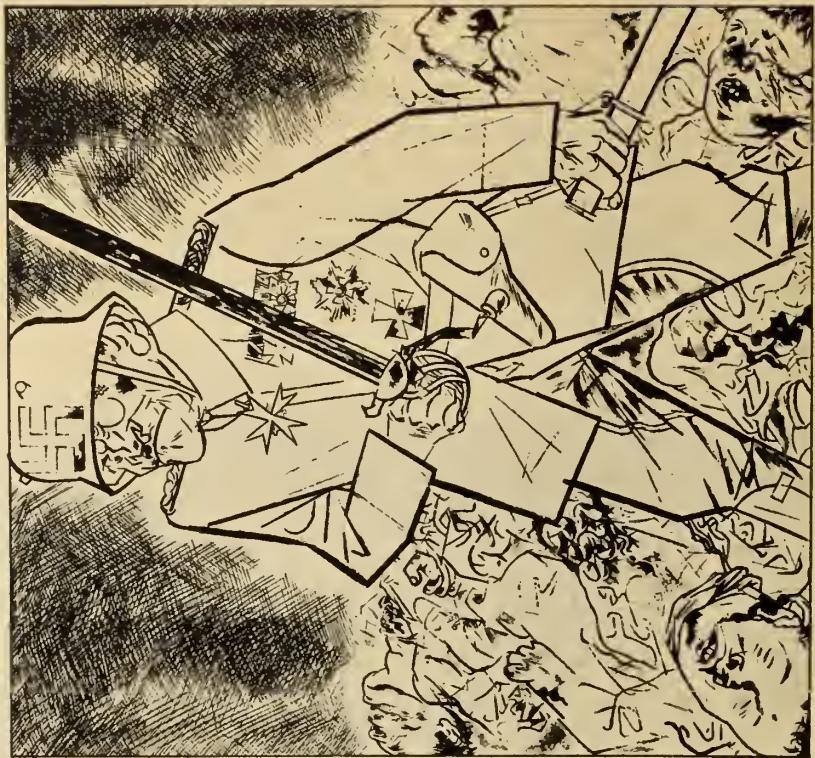
Late in 1912 Fiedler went to Paris, and by the spring of 1913 Grosz had saved enough money from the sale of drawings to join him. But Paris, on the whole, was disappointing. He seems to have had little contact with French art, spent most of his time drawing from the model, without instruction, at the Académie Colarossi, and returned to Berlin in the fall. It was there rather than in France that Grosz felt the full impact of the modern movements in art. Shortly after his return, Berlin had its first German Autumn Salon, modelled on the Parisian *Salon d'Automne*, and heavily weighted with the work of the futurists. More than any other group, they made a profound impression on the still groping student, perhaps because their dynamic and essentially romantic interpretation of contemporary life was akin to his own attitude, though achieved in an entirely different way. Under their influence Grosz began to experiment with angular, semi-cubist distortions, with ray lines denoting movement and with the simultaneous presentation of several aspects of a scene interwoven in the same picture. His first mature style was just emerging when the long shadow of the World War fell suddenly across Europe.

Grosz enlisted as an infantryman, but the patriotic fervor of that moment scarcely survived his training. Military discipline galled him. The shaved head, the ill-fitting uniform, the insolence of officers, the whole calculated system of breaking the recruit's spirit and reducing him to a cog in the military machine filled him with a rage and a despair that even war itself could not surpass. Indeed the bitter drawings which were soon to grow from his experience are not anti-war in the strictest sense for there is scarcely a scene dealing with the grim business of slaughter. Rather they are anti-army or else aimed at the civilian effects of war, the profiteering, the prostitution and the general collapse of moral standards. It was these aspects of city life that Grosz turned to first after a brain fever had won him an honorable discharge from the army early in 1916. Returning to Berlin filled "with disgust and aversion for mankind," he poured his disillusionment into a series of acid drawings like that of the lurid prostitute in *Furlough* or the axe-murderers sitting on the dismembered corpse of their victim in *After It Was Over They Played Cards*. Stylistically these are quite different though done in the same year.

The former still bears faint traces of his *linienstil* in the patterning and the solid areas of color (now acidulous blues, greens and oranges) carefully laid in between the lines. The latter carried forward his futurist-inspired experiments with angular distortions and the same kind of spare line that he had already developed in a few earlier drawings such as his *Pandemonium* of 1914. Characteristic of Grosz alone is the keen eye that picks out all the sordid details and adds them up for a cumulative effect of horror. Still more markedly futurist were several large oils such as *The Adventurer* and *Dedication to Oskar Panizza* done also in the years 1916–17 and now lost.

THE LITTLE MURDERER. 1918. Oil. 26×26. Associated American Artists Galleries.





THE WHITE GENERAL. 1919. Brush and ink. $20\frac{3}{4} \times 19$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.



THE UNCLE. c. 1921. Pen and ink. $24\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{3}{8}$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.

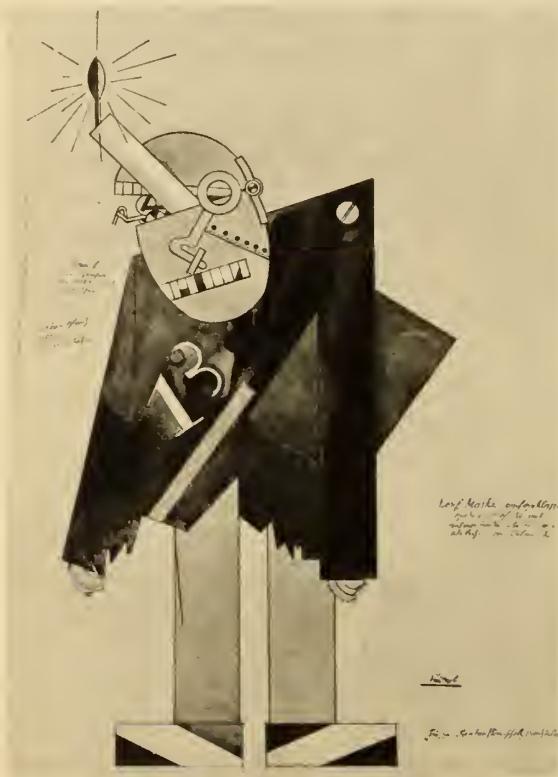
In his autobiography Grosz recalls this period as a “fruitful, romantic and yet realistic” interlude. He was not yet committed entirely to social satire and drew a variety of subjects including street scenes and some purely imaginary views of America, a country which exercised a continuous fascination for him. It was at this time, too, that he met his future wife, Eva Louise Peter, and that Theodore Däubler wrote the first of several articles on him in *Weisse Blätter*, bringing him a sudden fame in the higher circles of art. Through Däubler he met a number of collectors, including the wealthy businessman Sally Falk, who became a kind of patron and gave him a small monthly allowance. Grosz was quick to take advantage of these contacts. “My faith in money,” he wrote in his autobiography, “. . . was still unspoiled by Fabian ideas of reform and by the enlightened views of those who believed that money was ruinous to one’s character.” Swallowing his revulsion, he now played with Falk a game “of servile flattery . . . to the hilt,” as he was to do with others on occasion. No doubt the general cynicism of the war years influenced his actions to some extent, but Grosz has often been torn by a deep conflict between his artistic integrity and a yearning for worldly success. The invincible artist in him has always won, but not without a struggle which has sometimes been reflected in his work.

In mid-1917, as Germany was desperately assembling its last resources of manpower, Grosz was drafted into the army again. Later he drew a bitter cartoon of a military doctor inspecting a skeleton and pronouncing it “K V”—*Kriegs Verwendungsfähig*—fit for service. Mentally the young artist was as unfit as the bones. Assigned to train troops and move prisoners of war, he broke down completely and was put in a military asylum for the shell-shocked and insane where he was surrounded by human derelicts, each with “something missing—a leg, an eye or two, a stomach, a foot.” There he stayed until his discharge just before the end of the war, drawing continuously to relieve his emotions and alternating between despair and a rebelliousness that nearly got him court-martialled when he resisted the command of a superior officer to get out of bed and return to active duty. The Grosz who came back to Berlin late in 1918 was filled with a deeper hatred and pessimism than he had known before. The greatest of his satirical drawings were to be done in the next three or four years.

From the beginning, Grosz found himself driven politically to the left, although his espousal of Marxism does not appear to have been wholehearted. Again one is faced with one of those odd contradictions in his character. In spite of his violent attacks on the German class system—particularly on army, church and rich bourgeoisie—he had little real sympathy with the working masses and was not, he reiterates, a reformer at heart. He knew well what he hated in post-war Germany and fought it with a courage which three times caused his arrest and trial. But his profound pessimism found little hope in any kind of social panacea and even at the moment that he was most active making street-corner speeches against the capitalist warmongers and extolling the proletariat, he found himself thinking, “I expect exactly nothing from the people. I have never indulged in worshipping them even when I pretended to believe in certain political

theories." But other events tended to embroil him still more deeply in politics, leading him soon to the use of his art as a political weapon. One of these events was the German Dada movement, founded by Richard Hülsenbeck and others at the end of the war. In Switzerland and France Dada had already startled the conservative with its calculated nonsense, its attitude of utter disillusionment, its anti-esthetic stand and its nihilistic concept of man as an unthinking machine. In Germany it preserved for a time the same characteristics. The Dadaists, whom Grosz joined soon after his discharge, hired theaters, put on spontaneous entertainments, insulted the audience and often ended with fights which required police intervention. As "Propagandada," Grosz walked the streets of Berlin in a death's head, carried a calling card with an artificial eye on one side, the legend, "How do you think tomorrow?" on the other, and invented such slogans as "Come to Dada if you like to be embraced and embarrassed." With Franz Jung, its chief spokesman, he edited *Every Man His Own Football* and collaborated on several other Dada magazines, notably *Die Pleite* and *Der blutige Ernst*.

But the German movement, unlike Dada elsewhere, had from the beginning a strong political cast. The program drawn up by Hülsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann (recently published in Robert Motherwell's *The Dada Painters and Poets*) called first for an



DESIGN FOR THEATRICAL DUMMY
IN IWAN GOLL'S "METHUSALEM."
1922. Watercolor. $20\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{3}{4}$. Associated
American Artists Galleries.

"international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical communism." Grosz was carried along in the general tide and most of his artistic contributions to Dada were actually political cartoons such as his moving tribute to the martyred Karl Liebknecht and his violent attack, in *The White General*, on the "Free Corps," an ultra-conservative army clique which stood for the restoration of the monarchy and used the swastika as its symbol long before Hitler's rise. He even made a sharp comment on American class warfare in the drawing *Bringing Them into Conformity*, based on Upton Sinclair's *100%*. Such deadly political broadsides were both more serious in purpose and more rational in method than the work of the French Dadaists. Except in a few of his collages, like *The Engineer Heartfield* with its exposed mechanical heart, the typically shocking and irrational Dada spirit is rarely found in Grosz's work. Oddly, its strongest manifestation appeared in stage sets which he did for a play that was not, itself, a Dada affair—Iwan Goll's *Methusalem*. For this he designed, in 1922, over life-size puppets which were moved about by actors hidden behind them. Apparently influenced by Picabia's machine figures (though Grosz does not recall whether he knew them at the time) the *Methusalem* dummies were made up of odds and ends of commonplace objects in true Dada fashion and emitted a variety of mechanical



THE ENGINEER HEARTFIELD. 1920.
Watercolor and collage. 16×11. The
Museum of Modern Art, gift of General
A. Conger Goodyear.



THE POET MAX HERMANN-NEISSE. 1927. Oil. $23\frac{3}{8} \times 29\frac{1}{8}$. The Museum of Modern Art.

noises. In the figure illustrated, for example, the artist has noted in the margin, "When he speaks, steam gushes out from time to time," and "There [with an arrow pointing to his hinged head] it could rattle and screech while he is speaking." Some nine or ten other stage designs which Grosz executed between 1920 and 1930 were more conservative, although he developed an imaginative technique of projecting his sets on flat screens placed at various angles behind the actors.

But these were peripheral activities. Grosz's main energy in the years following the war went into those now famous drawings and paintings which catalogue with Teutonic thoroughness the moral decay of Germany under the Weimar Republic. Many were street scenes, peopled by every type of warped, self-centered humanity. With the terrible inflation of the 1920's, he turned his pen on the profiteers. Berlin's restaurants and cafés were a favorite setting, where greed and drunkenness make grim comparison with the legless veterans begging alms outside. The anatomy of lust is everywhere apparent, leering frankly in his brothels, slyly in an uncle peering at his half-nude niece. It is implicit in the lumpy sexual organs which wrinkle the clothes of his men and women and are sometimes seen, as if with an X-ray eye, through their garments. "Barbarism prevailed," Grosz recalls in his autobiography. "The streets became dangerous and were markets for prostitution, murder and cocaine deals." One of his first post-war paintings, *The Little Murderer*, reflected the common violence and debauchery. Continuously he revenged himself on the army in drawings like *Fit for Active Service* or *Vampire* with its contrasting types of German officers, one monocled, aristocratic, the other bullet-headed and pouchy-eyed, but both equally interested in the deathlike prostitutes who flit by them. Reacting against his Lutheran upbringing, he turned also on the church for its *Gott mit uns* attitude towards the war. In *The Lord's Prayer* his target was a complacent priest praying unctuously over the weeping prisoner at the block, while his drawing of the crucified Christ wearing a gas mask scandalized even Berlin.

The sheer ferocity of Grosz's satire tends to obscure the fact that the means by which he achieved it changed considerably during the fourteen years that he remained in Germany after the war. Gradually he moved away from a semi-abstract stylization towards an increased realism. From 1918 to about 1920, he was still breaking his paintings, like *The Little Murderer*, into futurist angles and planes, simplifying forms into quasi-geometrical shapes and using a flattened perspective to create strong surface patterns. The same treatment, though less extreme, is apparent in the drawings of the period. Arms and even whole bodies tend to be rectangles, curves look as if they were drawn with a compass. All these regular parts are fitted together like a wild jigsaw puzzle into dynamic but quite flat designs. Undeniably effective in creating scenes of violence, such a highly stylized method had its limitations when it came to subtler characterization, and about 1920 Grosz abandoned it for a more pictorial style. In hundreds of drawings like *The Uncle* his line now explores all the irregularities of form, following a wrinkled trouser leg, losing itself in the folds of underwear, enriched by occasional hatching and spatter work.

STREET SCENE. 1933. Watercolor. $23 \times 18\frac{1}{2}$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.



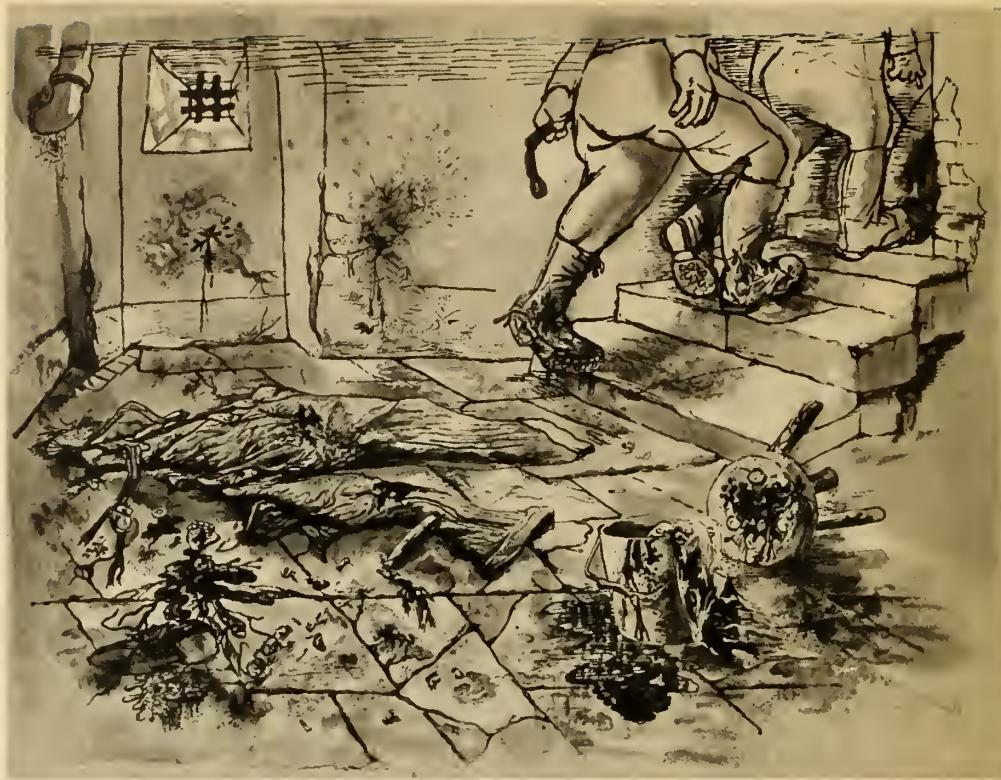
Still spare, with every stroke essential, it has much greater variety; it accents boldly the salient points or plays with feathery lightness over subordinate details. By the time he had painted his *Street Scene*, *Kurfürstendamm* in 1925, the futurist influence had disappeared from his oils as well, leaving only a remote trace in the slight flatness of the design. Two years later even this had gone as Grosz went on to do the most realistic work of his entire career, exemplified by his portrait of the hunchbacked poet, Max Hermann-Neisse. Here, for the first time since his student days, Grosz started with a full-scale, minutely detailed drawing which he traced on the canvas. While Hermann consumed a daily bottle of Silesian corn liquor and recited the story of his unhappy life, the artist laboriously painted, in thin glazes, every detail and texture of head and hands, even to the individual white eyelashes and the cracks in the lips. Such pictures—there were very few of them—are close in style to the work of the *neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity) group, which had reacted against both impressionism and abstract art. But while he knew its members and sympathized for a time with their aims, Grosz says that he never formally joined the movement. Nevertheless their extreme realism affected even his caricatures during the last few years of his life in Germany. He was working more and more in watercolor at this time, and papers like *Berlin Street*, *The Last Bottle* and *Thunderbeard* show a new

tightness of handling and a new attention to minute detail, although the satirical exaggerations and the free patterns of his washes, which are often quite independent of the forms and figures in the picture, tend to diminish the realist effect.

Grosz's fame, born during the interlude between his army terms, soon reached international proportions. This was due largely to the publication of his satirical drawings in a series of portfolios and books, starting in 1917. Brought out for the most part by his friend Wieland Herzfelde of the politically radical Malik Press, they included the well known *Das Gesicht der herrschenden Klasse* (*The Face of the Ruling Classes*), 1919, *Ecce Homo*, 1922, *Spiesserspiegel* (*Mirror of the Bourgeoisie*), 1924, *Ueber alles die Liebe* (*Love Above All*), 1931. At the same time his paintings were being shown, first by Hans Goltz, who was his dealer from 1918 to about 1923, thereafter by Alfred Flechtheim. As Grosz's fame spread, it made him as many enemies as admirers, particularly among the classes which were his principal targets. In 1920 he was arrested, tried for attacking the Reichswehr in his portfolio *Gott mit Uns*, and fined 5,000 marks. (Grosz believes that the army was most



COUPLE. 1934. Watercolor.
 $25\frac{1}{4} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$. Whitney Museum of
American Art.



AFTER THE QUESTIONING. 1935. Watercolor. $17\frac{1}{4} \times 22\frac{3}{4}$. Collection Mr. Arnott J. White.

irked by the fact that he had purposely misdrawn the uniforms, giving them the wrong number of buttons and subtly distorting them in other ways.) Again in 1923, after the publication of *Ecce Homo*, he was brought into court on a charge of defaming public morals, specifically of "corrupting the inborn sense of shame and virtue innate in the German people." Although the eminent journalist Maximilian Harden testified in his defense, he lost again and was fined 6,000 marks, while some twenty-four plates (including one of a prostitute wearing a cross) were confiscated from the unsold copies of the portfolio. Only from his third trial did Grosz emerge victorious. This was in 1928 when he and his publisher, Herzelde, were convicted of blasphemy and sacrilege because of two drawings in the portfolio *Hintergrund (Background)*, which consisted of Grosz's stage sets for a play by Hasek, *The Good Soldier Schwejk*. The offending plates were the famous one of Christ in a gas mask and another depicting a German pastor balancing a cross on his nose. The fine was 2,000 marks each, but in 1929 the State Court of Berlin reversed the conviction, Judge Siegert holding that the artist had "made himself the spokesman of millions who disavow war," by showing "how the Christian Church had served an unseemly cause which it should not have supported."

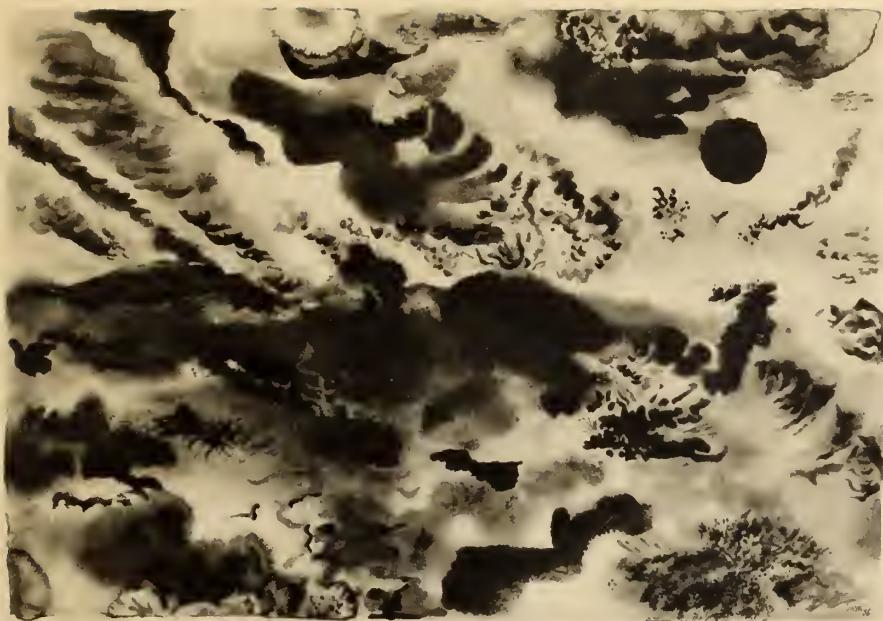
Paradoxically, the very cynicism which Grosz attacked in the rich middle classes played into his hands and made him, as he wrote in his autobiography, "almost rich." Impressed by his fame, many of his victims sought a kind of inverted immortality from his pencil. "'If you could only . . . imitate my crooked legs,' " they would tell him, "'or how my friend Oscar is always gorging and then puking all over the carpet. . . . Take your time about it. . . . Just show us as repugnant as we are.' " The conversation sounds improbable but its spirit doubtless existed and the results were tangible. As the decade of the 1930's dawned, Grosz presented to the world the far from common picture of a successful, comfortably established modern artist. In 1920 he had married Eva Peter and was now the father of two sons—Peter, born in 1926, Martin, in 1930. He had money to travel, had made trips to Italy, Russia, Switzerland and three to Paris. Always something of a dandy, he preferred to dress like a wealthy businessman rather than a painter and once, in the remote days of 1915, had impersonated a prosperous Dutch merchant at an artists' gathering where he was not known, shocking them by a ghoulish plan to make money through the use of war-crippled salesmen. To Herzfelde on that occasion, as to many others since, he gave the impression of a complete materialist, a man who had "lost all faith," who in lieu of a soul had "Just nothing. Or only doubts. Or an empty hole. Nothing." Yet in spite of his cynicism and his worldly success, Grosz was neither happy nor secure. The shadow of Nazism had begun to creep across Germany and its zealots were not likely to condone the detractor of German greatness nor approve of his leftist political activities. There were menacing portents. A loyal studio assistant appeared one day in a brown shirt and warned him to be careful. A threatening note calling him a Jew (which he is not) was found beside his easel. A friend disappeared in strange circumstances. Under these stresses, the mystical and romantic side of Grosz's complicated character began to emerge. Dreams and premonitions of disaster haunted him, like the Gothic nightmare recounted in his autobiography which ended with a friend shouting at him, "Why don't you go to America?" Fear grew from the first uneasiness to a black foreboding. One spring morning in 1932 a cable arrived from the Art Students League in New York, inviting him to teach there during the summer. He accepted immediately. It was not the cynical "merchant from Holland" who later wrote, "I know today that a definite Power wanted to save me from annihilation."

From the time he had read *The Leatherstocking Tales* at nine, Grosz had wanted to see America and he was well aware on his arrival that it might become his future home. New York did not betray him. From the moment he stepped off the boat he loved the city, which he found a great deal friendlier, more colorful—and hotter—than he had expected. He also stepped into a flurry of publicity caused partly by his reputation (*Time* greeted him with the headline, "Mild Monster Arrives"), partly by the controversy which his teaching appointment at the League had stirred up. Earlier in the year John Sloan, then its president, had advocated inviting Grosz, and the Board of Control had approved, only to reverse itself at a subsequent meeting. Sloan had resigned in disgust

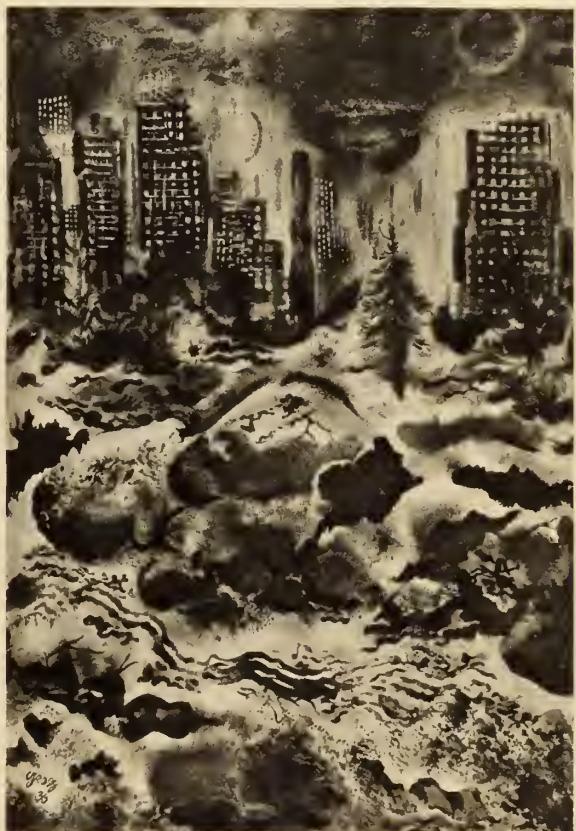
at what he called its "sentimental and financial timidities," and the Board, though accepting his resignation, had changed its mind again and finally confirmed the appointment. As a result, Grosz found that he had an unusually large class of curious students on his hands and very little English with which to instruct them. Eking out his vocabulary by graphic sketches, he managed better than he had hoped and discovered, in the process, that he enjoyed teaching. Indeed he has given courses, on and off, at the League ever since. Evenings in his solitary room at the Great Northern Hotel were more difficult. Letters from his family, still in Germany, gave him moments of homesickness that even the tabloids, which he read regularly to perfect his colloquial English, could not dispel. At such times he would reassure himself by looking out of his bathroom window at a small replica of the Statue of Liberty on the roof of a nearby warehouse.

By fall Grosz was convinced that events in Germany were heading towards disaster. He was not nearly so certain that he could support a wife and two children in a foreign land where he had lived for only a few months. Beset by doubts, he finally sailed for Berlin in October and brought his wife back to New York with him the following January. The children were left with an aunt. He had hardly returned when the painter Maurice Sterne generously offered to make him a partner in the school which he had recently founded at 40 East 49th Street. J. B. Neumann, Grosz's friend and first dealer in America, was appointed director that year and gave courses in art appreciation while Sterne and Grosz taught drawing and painting. The following season they moved to the Squibb Building, then managed by a father of one of the students. In the depth of the depression there were several unrented floors, one of which was turned over to the school for a percentage of the fees in lieu of rent, with the understanding that the artists would move to another floor if a more profitable tenant appeared. Shortly thereafter Sterne left New York and Grosz ran the school by himself until the spring of 1937, when it was discontinued. During most of the same period he was also teaching at the League and the steady income from the two jobs, though far from munificent, gave the future a less forbidding aspect. In the summer of 1933 Mrs. Grosz had returned to Germany and brought back the two boys to a small house which they rented in Bayside, Long Island. It was not too soon. Grosz was branded by the Nazi régime "Cultural Bolshevik No. 1," his work was included in the "Degenerate Art" exhibition at Munich in 1937 and the following year he was officially deprived of his German citizenship. But long before this—in January 1933—he had taken out his first American papers and on November 29, 1938, he became a citizen of the United States.

From the moment he set foot in New York in 1932, Grosz began to draw the city, avidly collecting faces, bits of architecture, ash cans, street signs, and every sort of humanity from dowagers to burlesque queens. He explored the Bowery, the waterfront, the theatre section, and found some of his most varied material in the crowds around Columbus Circle and in Central Park. In the years from 1933 to 1936 he turned this raw material into a series of watercolors representing his first impressions of the metropolis.



END OF THE WORLD. 1936. Watercolor and gouache. $12\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.



CENTRAL PARK AT NIGHT. 1936. Watercolor and gouache. 18×12. The Art Institute of Chicago.



STUDY FROM DUMMY. 1936. Pencil. $23\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{2}$. Associated American Artists Galleries.

As one might expect, these papers are closely related, technically, to his late German work in the same medium. Figures are thinly outlined; wet, transparent washes, often in pale colors, spread across the surface and create independent patterns in the background. Yet there is also a noticeable difference. The outlines are now broken and fragmentary; in a picture like *Couple* of 1933 they become a kind of decorative shorthand ornamenting the surface, while in others they disappear entirely. The washes are wetter, more blurred. In *New York Types* they created an almost flat design, perhaps because of the large areas of white paper left uncovered. In *Central Park at Night* they writhe and twist across the foreground in Oriental arabesques that seem strangely out of keeping with the rectangular skyscrapers beyond. While often handsome in color and design, the total effect is rather tentative, as if the artist was overwhelmed by his subject and could not quite make up his mind how to treat it. Perhaps the same attitude is reflected in his frequent efforts to synthesize the city rather than to record it. Many of these papers are composite images, bringing together a variety of different though related impressions. *Heads* and *New York Types* were assembled from sketches made in several places and at several times, while *New York Harbor* is no actual view, Grosz says, but an attempt to capture the changing and ephemeral character of the skyline with buildings going up and coming down, "like hands thrust into the air." Such pictures probe at the meaning of New York, though they are scarcely incisive enough to solve it.

A still deeper conflict lies behind the uncertain direction of Grosz's work at this time. Put quite simply, satire no longer appealed to him. The bitterness and disgust which had inspired the great German drawings evaporated like a night mist in America, leaving him with a profound sense of relief and a new optimism that he hardly dared trust. But it also left him peculiarly unarmed as an artist. His whole fame had been built on satire and now it pursued him, everyone waiting expectantly to see what he would pillory in America. For a time he tried. Among the early watercolors, *Couple* of 1934 exaggerates effectively the thin lips and weary expression of the businessman in contrast to the predatory gaiety of his wife. *In Central Park* deals with a similar theme using color even more effectively in the startling pink of the woman's cheeks and lips against the pale blue-grays which pervade the rest of the picture. Perhaps there is also a hint of his old attitude in some of the street scenes and studies of New York types, but on the whole these seem to reflect a sympathetic interest rather than a moral judgment. In any case, even his most satirical American papers are mild indeed compared with his German work.

Nor are the drawings of the same time much sharper. Soon after Grosz's arrival Alexander King commissioned him to do cartoons for *Americana*, a short-lived magazine which was published erratically from February 1932 to November 1933. King exhorted him to "scratch their eyes out, George," but "for me," writes Grosz in his autobiography, "something of that spirit had died." The resulting drawings, like those he was to do later for *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair* and several other magazines, were keenly observed glimpses of

American life, only occasionally aimed at our follies and even then essentially good-humored. The nearest approach to the old Grosz are the sixty-five plates which he drew for the portfolio *Interregnum*, published here by the Black Sun Press in 1936. And it is significant that these deal entirely with German society during the 1928-32 interlude before Hitler's Third Reich. To Malcolm Cowley, who reviewed them in the *New Republic* (December 23, 1936), they reflected a mental rather than a visceral hatred and were further weakened, he felt, by Grosz's "lack of loyalty to any [political] party." The review betrays the growing disappointment of liberal and radical elements with Grosz's transformation. The same attitude, though based on purely esthetic grounds, had already been expressed by E. M. Benson, who concluded his perceptive article on Grosz in *Creative Art* (May 1933) with the words: "Temporarily, at least, the gladiator is resting. Perhaps the future will tempt him back among the lions." It was not to do so in the sense that Benson meant. The deep and involuntary springs of social satire had dried up as mysteriously as they had flowed. "I never wanted to become a caricaturist," Grosz says today. "Events forced me into it, almost against my will."

THE FAT AND THE THIN. 1937. Watercolor. $18\frac{3}{8} \times 24$. Associated American Artists Galleries.





TREE. 1937. Pen and ink. $18\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.

What was it, then, that Grosz had wanted to be? It seemed to him, looking back at the desolate years of war and post-war disillusionment in Germany, that he had missed the simple calling of artist, that he did not yet know how to handle paint with a painter's delight in its qualities, that he had been blind to the beauty of the world, whether in a blade of grass or the curves of a nude. He looked again at the old masters, at Raphael's serenity, at Rembrandt's profound understanding of humanity, at the vitality of Rubens and the sensual playfulness of Fragonard. He even looked with nostalgia at the sentimental 19th-century German paintings of his youth—the charging hussars, the elegantly dressed picnickers in opalescent landscapes, the roistering monks around a wine cask. In all of them he sensed affirmative qualities which he had missed, and the art of the satirist seemed warped and hollow in comparison. Only half-consciously at first but soon with a growing conviction, he worked to re-make his art—not in the image of any "modern" style but rather according to his understanding of the long tradition of Western painting. "It was not an escape," he wrote later. "It was a new beginning."



A PIECE OF MY WORLD, II. c. 1938. Oil. $39\frac{1}{2} \times 65$. Associated American Artists Galleries.

The first step was a return to nature and to the impersonal model. The forces that impelled him in this direction were complex. One was certainly his revulsion against satire with a consequent dislike of painting man as an individual. Another was a purely emotional response to nature, which he rediscovered at Cape Cod in the summer of 1936. Still another may have been an instinctive desire to start afresh with basic forms, to study them, understand them and render them as faithfully as possible. This is particularly apparent in the drawings of the period. As early as 1935 he had rendered *Reeds and Grasses* at Bayside with crisp precision, and that summer—on a trip to Europe that skirted Germany but took him to the Danish island of Bornholm—he made a detailed ink and wash study of a rock formation, skillfully contrasting the massive boulders with the delicate tracery of the plants between them. In the same year he drew the carefully modelled portraits of his sons—Peter playing cowboy, Martin in bed with the mumps. In 1936 Grosz moved his family to Douglaston, Long Island, and several drawings done there are even more precisely realistic, especially a number of studies from an artist's dummy or lay figure, variously draped and masked. The same tendency is apparent in many of the nature drawings of the next few years, culminating in the extraordinarily firm yet subtle handling of *Dunes at Wellfleet* in 1940. Grosz had discovered the joy of sheer imitation—what he calls “the magic of reproduction.” While he has never considered it an end in itself, it became a very necessary part of his artistic development.

To a lesser extent it also entered into his nature paintings of the period. But here it was modified by other considerations, some technical, some stylistic. In the watercolors he appears to have been striving for a decorative effect in the best sense of that often derogatory word. They developed logically out of his early New York papers and, like them, are done in luminous, transparent washes with little or no pencil outlining. But now the washes are not so wet and are more firmly controlled. A calligraphic brush-stroke plays across the surface, building cloud forms with repeated hooks or swirls, flowing sinuously along the forms of reeds or grasses. There is a conscious patterning of light and dark areas, a search for movement and counter-movement. A new and much richer color range is explored, not always successfully for some of these papers come dangerously close to a kind of garishness that has been, at times, Grosz's most serious weakness. The best are those which are done in simple harmonies of a few hues or which are restricted to tender, opalescent effects handled with great sensitivity.

But it was in oil painting, a medium which he had never used very much and had scarcely touched since leaving Germany, that Grosz found the greatest excitement. On Cape Cod during the summer of 1936 he started to work with oil again, and two Guggenheim Fellowships in 1937 and 1938 helped him to continue his experiments. From the beginning a marked difference was apparent in his handling of the medium. In Germany, with a few exceptions, he had treated oil very much like watercolor, painting thinly with little thought for surface enrichment or technical variety. Now he began to exploit all its possibilities of underpainting, scumbling and glazing, of thick and thin

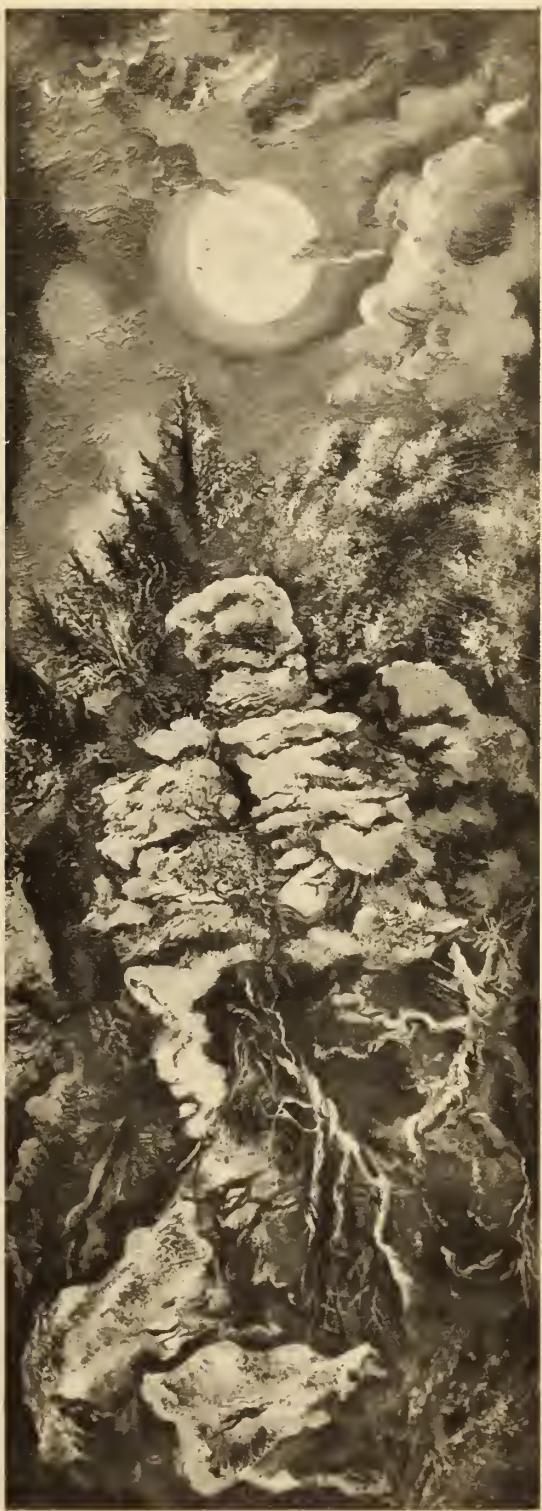


THE BLUE CHAIR. 1938. Oil. 26×20. Roland P. Murdock Collection, Wichita Art Museum.

impasto, of texture and brushstroke and palette knife work. His pictures were built up over a red or green toned ground in multiple layers, often as many as six or even ten. He developed his own unorthodox methods, such as mixing fine sand with a personally prepared beeswax and other ingredients for textural effects. He became an ardent collector of brushes and made many of his own, delighting in the different character of their strokes. *Approaching Storm*, for instance, was painted largely with a fan-shaped French brush, which he had just discovered, and owes much of its feathery quality to that fact. In short, Grosz fell in love with oil for its rich and sensuous qualities which released a side of his nature that the past had conspired to repress.

As he worked on the landscapes, nudes and still lifes of these years, a new peace of mind descended on the artist. Momentarily he forgot the growing shadow of another world war and lost himself in the beauties of nature and the human body. He did not work out-of-doors because, in his paintings, he was concerned with something beyond literal representation. Nevertheless he prepared for each picture "like a naturalist," making detailed studies of grass or shells or the female model, which he rearranged considerably on the canvas. More significant is the new style which emerged in these oils and which is quite

LANDSCAPE, BORNHOLM. 1938. Oil. 33
× 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph
H. Hirshhorn.



different from the realism of his drawings or the decorative patterning of his watercolors. Its most striking feature is a baroque movement that swirls and twists in varied rhythms in and out of the picture plane. In *The Blue Chair* the heaped clothes seem to writhe with a life of their own. In his *Self Portrait* of 1938 the motion ascends in a flame-like pattern, not only through the contours but also through the lights and shadows, which both model the figure and move as a part of the calculated design. In *Approaching Storm* the wind that sweeps the dunes seems to have formed them into curves that echo those of the nude figure and billow around her like a circling frame. The same wind—which blows through many of Grosz's pictures—flutters the towel of *Nude with Bath Towel* into a staccato pattern that is a counterpoint to the slow, sinuous lines of the body. In much of this work there is a kind of sensuous playfulness as if the artist was testing his virtuosity. The impression is heightened by the experimental borrowings which he occasionally made from painters whom he has admired. The red outlines of several nudes stem, he says, from Fragonard. The head-dress in *Nude with Bath Towel* was painted as a kind of affectionate homage to the 19th-century expert in women's finery, Alfred Stevens. The moonlit *Landscape, Bornholm* was partly a tribute to a forgotten Pomeranian night painter whom Grosz had liked in his youth. One would scarcely be aware of such influences if the artist did not point them out, for they are thoroughly assimilated in his individual style. However, the conviction grows that these pictures are not his most profound work but rather an exercise of new skills which at times led him close to a kind of nostalgic sentimentality.

Indeed the old conflict between expediency and the higher ideals of art erupted again in Grosz's life soon after he came to America. Probably it is a battle that every good painter has to fight with himself at some period and in some degree, but few have struggled with the problem so openly as Grosz. In his case it now took the form of a sudden yearning to be a successful commercial illustrator, a highly paid painter of slick advertisements and covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*, one of which (by Norman Rockwell) he kept pinned to the wall of his Douglaston studio. A variety of factors seem to have begotten this strange ambition. Only one of these was the perennial discouragement of the creative artist at the difficulty of selling his work, for actually Grosz had done quite well in this respect. A more powerful motive seems to have been his desire to Americanize himself and his art, to accept fully the standards of the average, optimistic, good-natured, middle-class American rather than the intellectual or creative exception. And finally, judging from his autobiography, he was also impelled by a temporary revulsion against modernism, an almost childlike desire to return to the simple, storytelling pictures of his youth. "How I would have loved to be able to control the sweet, the dainty, the normal and the beautiful." He tried. A "morgue" of clippings—reproductions of everything from cowboys to laundry tubs—was painfully assembled and indexed. Books on illustrating technique were studied. He went after commissions and received several, the most interesting being illustrations for a limited edition of O. Henry's *The Voice of the City*. But when it came to imitating the polished manner of the commercial men, he found to his distress that he



SELF PORTRAIT. 1938. Oil. $46\frac{1}{2} \times 33\frac{1}{4}$. Associated American Artists Galleries.



DUNES AT WELLFLEET. 1940.
Wolff pencil and wash. $12\frac{5}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$. Associated American Artists
Galleries.



NUDE. 1941. Pencil. $23\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.

simply could not do it. It was surely not a question of technical ability, for Grosz is as skillful as any artist living. One senses, rather, that it was a case of his artistic integrity asserting itself below the level of consciousness and refusing to be betrayed entirely. Personally Grosz could dress and act and look like a typical American businessman, but he could not paint like one, nor even to please one.

This odd chapter in the artist's life is revealing in still another way, for it is further evidence that Grosz's conscious aims are often at variance with his actions as a painter. Just as he had "never wanted to become a caricaturist" in Germany, so he had failed in his carefully laid plan to transform himself into an American illustrator. And now—once more against his will—his thoughts kept returning to Europe, brooding over the growing menace of Nazism, the stories of persecution and atrocity, and eventually the disaster of a new war. "There was a certain horror in me," he says, "which could not be banished." It alternated with the periods of serenity when he was working on his nudes and landscapes, but it was never long absent. Early in his American career, it began to find expression in his art, not in satire but in nightmare visions, some based on actual incidents, others symbolic. While they share with his German work an anti-war spirit, they are different in nearly every other respect. Where the German drawings dealt principally with the social evils of war, the American paintings turned directly to the brutality and destruction of war itself. Where the German work was related to the incisive and rational approach of satirists like Daumier, the American pictures were in the romantic, north Gothic, terror-haunted tradition of Grünewald and Bosch, artists for whom Grosz's admiration has steadily grown. Paradoxically the artist became, in some ways, more Teutonic here than he had been in Germany—a fact which may account for the lack of understanding which his paintings were to receive from many of our critics to whom the northern tradition in art has never been as sympathetic as that of France.

The new direction appears, tentatively at first, in a series of watercolors done in 1934–35. Several of these are imaginary but remarkably powerful visualizations of actual events. The attack by armed troops on the workers' apartment houses in Vienna produced *Brotherly Love* with its thrusting bayonets and its ghastly corpse crumpled in the foreground. In this one detail, Grosz showed an early mastery of the technique of horror; parts of the body are deliberately clear—the gnarled hands, the staring eyes and bared teeth—but the rest is obscure, a crumpled mass suggesting impossible dislocations. Brutality by implication is used even more gruesomely in *After the Questioning*, which has also born the ironic title *They Couldn't Get Anything out of Him*. Drawn with deliberate crudity, it illustrates a story told to the artist by his Jewish friend, Dr. Hans Borchardt, long imprisoned at Dachau and Sachsenhausen where part of the prisoners' indoctrination was a view of "a little still life" in a room just used for an unsuccessful questioning. The picture has much the same effect on the spectator that the sight itself must have had on the camp's inmates, but its horror is so extreme and the style, though appropriate, so repulsive that it nearly defeats its own ends. Grosz seems to have realized this



I'M GLAD I CAME BACK. 1942.
Oil. 28×20. Arizona State College,
Tempe.

unconsciously. He did several other subjects in the same manner, such as *Man Hunt* and *I Thought of a Friend of Mine*, and planned a long series illustrating Borchardt's stories but never completed it.

It is apparent now that his interest was swinging away from the topical towards a more universal expression of his dark forebodings. The transition can be seen in *The Menace*—a vision of Hitler's head and shoulders emerging like those of an evil djinn from a burning city, his blood-red fist brandishing through the flames. The message is perhaps too obviously the threat of Nazism, but here it is symbolized rather than documented. Other watercolors, such as *Punishment* and *Street Fight*, both done in 1934, deal with general scenes of destruction, unrelated to any actual events. The former, Grosz believes, is the first picture in which he expressed his growing premonition that Europe would again be plunged into war. And he appears to have foreseen with remarkable clarity the kind of war it would be, for here, long before the event, is the mass bombing of a city, the bright explosions, the debris, the gutted houses and the flames mounting everywhere. While



APPROACHING STORM. 1940. Oil. $16\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$. Whitney Museum of American Art.

this is a symbolic painting, it is not obviously so, since the scene has the actuality of one observed. But Grosz's vision also took a more apocalyptic turn in a few papers such as *This Burning World* or the somewhat later *End of the World* (1936). Here the conflagration spreads across a featureless landscape, explosions flower brilliantly against dark brown and green hills, heavy billows of smoke roll into the air and the half-obscured sun glows like a red eye. Much more abstractly painted than the preceding watercolors, these are patterns of universal disaster.

After 1936, Grosz turned increasingly to oil and for ten years, until his abrupt return to watercolor for the "Stickman" series, he used the lighter medium only occasionally. Some of the first oils grew out of watercolors, however, and are even related to them in style and treatment. *The Muckraker* of 1937 does little more than enlarge a paper of the same title done the year before. The face of the symbolic figure mired in a swamp is purposely blurred in the latter with a dark wash; the same thing is done, much less appropriately, in the oil. An *Apocalyptic Landscape* of 1937, now destroyed, was closely related to the *End of the World* watercolor of 1936, its fluid pattern echoing the wet technique of the latter. The oil *Street Fight*, also of 1937 and, according to Grosz, inspired by the Spanish Civil War, is quite similar to the earlier paper of the same title, both being explosive compositions that radiate violently from the center. There is no doubt that all these canvases are richer in texture and more impressive in size but otherwise they say little that had not already been stated in the watercolors.

Soon, however, Grosz began to enlarge his concepts in designs of more complicated movement and more elaborate detail, neither possible in watercolor. Among the first was *A Piece of My World, I* (c. 1938), "a kind of pyre," as he wrote for the Newark Museum's catalogue, "the symbol of the burning ruins of an Europa gone to pieces and rubble. . . . I painted it almost as in a dream of impending catastrophe." But it was a very conscious skill that gave the dream form. Above a dark pool of water and a ruined building, the earth writhes slowly upwards in a serpentine composition that suddenly explodes in flames and broken debris at the top. Such a landscape never existed yet one is scarcely aware of its fantastic quality because it is so alive and so emotionally consistent. The twisted earth suggests, as Grosz points out, the cringing of a dying leaf or a wounded animal, and its sluggish motion is not only a foil to the activity above but seems, in a strange way, more horrible than the actual destruction. The dark, "Bosch-like color," to borrow the artist's own description, and the prismatic flames, which he says were influenced by Grünewald, as well as the whole concept of the picture indicate that he was quite consciously looking back at his medieval, north European heritage. For many years he was to continue to draw on this, though always in a personal and an entirely contemporary way.

From 1936 on, Grosz's work tends to fall into series, that is, into groups of pictures dealing with the same subject. These were not systematically planned; they were the result of his fascination with certain themes to which he returned, sometimes at wide intervals, as he perceived new possibilities and developed new variations. Thus *A Piece*

of My World, I ushered in what might be called his ruin series, based on a vision of conflagration and destruction which became more intense after the actual outbreak of the war. In 1942 he resumed the theme in *I Awoke and I Saw a House Burning*, its very title suggesting the nightmare quality of the scene. Here, as in most of the series, the human figure is small, buffeted and tossed about like the rubble of which the picture is principally composed. One looks twice before seeing the peering faces in windows and holes, the men and women falling into the flames in the background. Here, too, Grosz introduced a circle of rats—which were to become the personification of evil in much of his later work—avidly consuming a pile of unrecognizable remains. This element of unrecognizability plays a large part throughout the series. *It Haunts Me* of 1945 (again a nightmare title) looks at first glimpse like an abstraction of violence, a pattern of writhing and splintering forms. Gradually one perceives the two huddled men behind their barricade, the barbed wire, the explosion, the burning house. Yet much still remains unexplained. What is the twisted mass in the foreground or the star-shaped thing at the left? Certainly they are not meaningless brushwork, for they are painted quite precisely, in parts even with exquisite care. All one can be sure of is that they are forms of general dissolution. This is enough, for the imagination does the rest more powerfully than if it were given explicit horrors. Following the example of German scholarship, one might well term Grosz the Master of the Unidentified Debris.

The ruin series culminates in two pictures of 1946, *Peace, II* and *The Pit*, both among Grosz's finest American work. Unlike the rest, *Peace* is a quiet painting, symbolizing the weariness and despair of the war's last years. Except for the orange glare that fills the sky, the colors are subdued, pale blues and grays and strange pinks that play almost tenderly across the destruction. The gaping hole of the ruin is, for Grosz, the womb of the earth, torn and violated. The gray man with the red-rimmed eyes who emerges is a grim personification of hopelessness. Technically the picture is evidence of Grosz's immense increase in skill. There is a new weaving of thinly glazed areas among those of heavy impasto and the complex circular design is handled more subtly than in the past, its movement often broken and resumed in new directions.

All of the same skill and even more virtuosity went into Grosz's biggest, most ambitious and, in the writer's opinion, his greatest painting, *The Pit*. Here is a truly fantastic vision with the scope and the nightmare reality of Bosch and a superbly integrated design that holds together all the elaborate symbolism of our unhappy times. Iconographically, the picture is fascinating. From the pit with its burning city, evil swarms upward into the world in the guise of a thousand rats, a long sinuous line of them with its front ranks just emerging in the foreground. At the left, the unknown soldier, half-crazed, carries his own missing leg under his arm. Above him is prostitution, a sensuous nude embraced by a headless and bodiless figure—a pair of anonymous arms. Nearby, an emaciated mother and child personify starvation and a mad fanatic works the strings of red, white and black puppets, the political taboos of our day. In the center, money, looking like winged doves,



I WAS ALWAYS PRESENT. 1942. Oil. 36×28. Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art.



NUDE WITH BATH TOWEL. 1942. Oil. 28×20. Associated American Artists Galleries.

is scattered from a broken vault, near which the dead hang on a gibbet. Below, the eternal drunkard sits on a pile of empty bottles, while beside him a solitary figure, perhaps the artist himself, stares at the scene from his barred prison. Over it all hover two apparitions: in the center the moon-like face of Mother Europa with blood at the corner of her mouth and her arm filled with struggling figures, at the left death, as a skeleton, winging down with a fluttering, yellow-green shroud. The shattered house which mounts high on the right is not an impersonal ruin; to Grosz it is the house he never saw where his mother died in a bombing during the war.

The skill with which this elaborate symbolism has been woven into a single picture is impressive. Using a setting which suggests a crypt or grotto, Grosz has built up his incidents into restless, fluttering lines that dart forward and back, upward and down like bats in a cavern. Big broken forms balance the multiplicity of detail and bridge the complicated system of levels. At top and bottom the restless activity fades away into the mysterious depths of the sky and the pit. "The unformed, the nihilistic, the chaotic has a tremendous appeal for me," Grosz says, but he is also distrustful of this side of his nature, holding it, though only half-seriously, to be "a little dangerous, a little on the side of insanity." This is one of the few pictures in which he has yielded to it completely—and with what unexpected results. For here, despite the symbolism, is no anti-war tract but almost a glorification of destruction, a kind of apocalypse painted, one would say, with love, not hate. The situation is a little like that of Kafka's officer in the penal colony who fell so deeply in love with his own torture machine that he chose to die on it himself. The parallel is not exact for Grosz's romanticism, despite his admiration for Kafka, is more disciplined and less morbid. A fairer comparison would be with some of the *Last Judgments* of Renaissance art or, more obviously, Bosch. Like these, *The Pit* is a moral painting with a strong weakness for demons.

Another theme which absorbed Grosz during the 1936–46 decade was the plight of the individual in war. This series was first fully stated in the large oil *A Piece of My World, II* of about 1938, which in spite of its title bears no relation to the Newark Museum's painting. Instead it is a ragged horde of soldiers, emaciated, unkempt and carrying a weird assortment of patched-up weapons. They are quite different from the symbolic figures in the ruin series, for each is fully characterized. Grimacing with defiance or despair, they emerge from the ground like moles and move through a dreary landscape of ruins and fallen trees, following a banner emblazoned with a ham impaled on a fork. Since they have never seen a ham, Grosz explains, this is as meaningless as everything else they do. Plainly they are without feeling, for a rat gnaws at the leg of one, who pays no attention. The high impasto of the paint is laid on in squirming ribbons, which is not only appropriate to the mood of the picture but also suggests an influence of Magnasco, for whom Grosz has a great fondness. The composition is like the undulating legs of a centipede, echoed in the arms above. It is also related, though perhaps mostly in the artist's mind, to those 19th-century paintings of charging hussars which he had admired in his youth. "If you just



CAPE COD DUNES. 1945. Oil. 12×33. Associated American Artists Galleries.

tidied it up a little," Grosz says, "it would be quite like them. I always wanted to be a historical painter and I finally became one—but in a very different way."

The gray, imaginary world with its strange inhabitants which Grosz created in this picture continued to haunt him for many years. In a number of canvases he revisited it, devising new episodes, though often with the same characters, and evolving a whole private legend about its laws, its customs, its way of life. Actually it did not spring into existence with a single picture. It had its genesis in several earlier watercolors such as *The Ambassador of Good Will* of 1936 and *The Fat and the Thin* of 1937. In both of these Grosz had played with the contrast between an army of fat, stupid soldiers and one of emaciated fanatics. At the beginning there were political implications; the "ambassador" wears a Nazi arm band, his elaborate equipment symbolizes German love of efficiency, the hearts on his helmet German sentimentality. But the setting of the watercolors is still a prosaic one, not the unreal land of his myth. When he painted *A Piece of My World, II*, he used the two ragged soldiers from *The Ambassador* watercolor with only slight alterations but developed his concept of their bleak country and their subterranean life. These features reappeared in an oil version of *The Ambassador of Good Will*, done in 1943. Except for the red face of the fat soldier, all the bright hues of the watercolor version have gone. The battle-torn landscape and its inhabitants blend in dull grays and tans; indeed one looks twice before perceiving the third "native" peering from his hole in the ground below the gibbet. With the erasing of the swastika from the ambassador's arm band, the picture has lost its political emphasis and has become both a monstrous fairy tale and an ironic symbol of the senselessness of war for conqueror and vanquished alike.

For a time Grosz abandoned this theme, returning to it only in his Stickman series of 1947–48. But before then he painted a number of other oils dealing with the effects of war on the individual. While these are also symbolic, they are soberer in mood, less fantastically conceived. Several are autobiographical. *No Let-up* and *The Wanderer*, both

based on earlier watercolors, show a single figure, which is at least partially a self portrait lost in the lonely reaches of a swamp and plodding grimly through the mud. In the background of the latter is a distant scene of flames and destruction, while nearby, carrion crows hover over an object hidden in the reeds. The figure has turned its back on both; it is the eternal refugee fleeing of necessity but with little hope. There was also a personal element in the genesis of his most powerful picture of the series, *The Survivor*. In 1936 Grosz had done an unusually detailed and expressive drawing of a soldier creeping across a battlefield, a dented knife clenched between his teeth. The fanatical face and staring eyes relate him somewhat to the thin men of *The Ambassador* watercolor, but when Grosz came to paint his soldier in oil eight years later, the image of his brother-in-law, who had been taken by the German army despite his age, kept intervening. As he worked, the concept developed into that of a still older man, his hair turned white, fighting on alone,

THE AMBASSADOR OF GOOD WILL. 1943. Oil. 27×33. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.





THE SURVIVOR. 1944. Oil. 31×39. Collection Mr. Marc J. Sandler.



THE SURVIVOR. 1936. Pen and ink. $19\frac{1}{8} \times 25$. The Art Institute of Chicago, gift of the Print and Drawing Club.

crazily, senselessly, for no reason that he can remember but simply because he has always been fighting and cannot stop. To be sure, there are still traces of the fantastic thin men in the ragged clothes, the improvised bayonet, the desolate setting. Yet this is no phantom. Its flesh and blood reality is emphasized in many ways, particularly by the beautifully painted hands and that cloud of snowy white hair that makes so moving a contrast to the oozing slime. Done with all the artist's technical skill, the variety of textures, the very feel of mud and flesh and water, the masterly handling of anatomy add greatly to the picture's immediacy. As in several of his war paintings, the composition is explosive, radiating from the center in four directions and taking, quite unconsciously Grosz says, the form of a giant, broken swastika.

Grosz did many oils which do not fall into series during the same 1936-46 period. Even so, he frequently used a theme more than once before finally dropping it. An example is his personification of death in two paintings of 1942. *I Was Always Present*, like much of his work, is based on an earlier drawing which was not itself intended as a study. But unlike most cases, the drawing here seems a little more successful than the oil, its heavy nervous lines suggesting an early German woodcut of an Apocalyptic Horseman. In his other symbolic treatment of death, *I'm Glad I Came Back*, Grosz placed the destroying angel before an open window overlooking a battlefield, its head turned partly away from the spectator. He then set himself the difficult task of expressing, through the pose alone, the sound of its "shrill, triumphant laugh." After these two canvases he abandoned the theme, finding the skeleton too conventional a symbol and preferring to create his own out of

a fertile imagination often stimulated by a variety of macabre literary sources. Thus a re-reading of a *Grimm's Fairy Tale* produced the painting of that title with its strange double-image of a heart about to be pierced by a knife. Nietzsche's superman is the central figure of *The Mighty One Surprised by Two Poets*—a figure intended to be a composite likeness of Hitler and Stalin. Here the symbolism of masochistic power-worship becomes complex. The two poets, who were suggested by some whom Grosz had known in Germany, are divorced from reason by their self-imposed ear plugs. They cling to the dictator with blind adoration, kissing the hem of his cloak and singing him songs of praise despite the fact that their bare rumps are torn by the whip which he holds, like a satanic tail, behind him. To emphasize the loneliness of The Mighty One, Grosz enlarged the canvas at the top, playing with a counter-theme, a subtle suggestion that the poets may eventually drag down their god to their own level, just as a parasitic vine strangles a tree. Two years later, in the Biblical story of *Cain*, Grosz found the inspiration for another treatment of the dictator, which he thinks of privately as *Hitler in Hell*. Actually, *Cain* may owe more to *Gulliver's Travels* than to the Bible, for the drama of fratricide is subordinate to the horde of tiny skeletons that emerge from Abel's blood to accuse his murderer. On a less macabre level, literary influences also affected some of his nature paintings at this time. The *Cape Cod Dunes* of 1945 is a double-image—not only dunes but two gigantic reclining figures—and was suggested in a general way, Grosz says, by a reading of Joris Karl Huysmans' *Là-bas*. The dark mood of Sappho's beautiful lines, “*The moon has set, and the Pleiades; it is the middle of the night and time passes, time passes, and I lie alone*” is echoed in the mysterious moonlit landscape of that title.

In 1946 Grosz moved to Huntington, Long Island, where he bought “the cottage” of a once large estate, remodelling it to provide a two-story studio with immaculate white walls and a system of green curtains to control the light. The almost clinical setting with its orderly rack of paints and its ranged jars of brushes suggest the workshop of a supremely efficient artisan—an effect somewhat modified by the heavily veiled dummy, a grotesque Swiss carnival mask hanging high on one wall, a male anatomical figure decorated with a Christmas ornament, the cast of a female torso capped with a sea shell, and an eruption of plaster hands, feet and ears painted very pink. Here, in 1947–48, Grosz produced one of the most fantastic series of his career, the so-called Stickmen.

The Stickmen were of complicated parentage. They are descended in part from the thin, fanatical soldiers of *A Piece of My World, II* and *The Ambassador of Goodwill*. But they also have an insect ancestor. This line of descent stems from a now lost illustration which Grosz had done for Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, the gruesome tale of a quite ordinary travelling salesman who awoke one morning to discover that he had turned into a species of giant cockroach. The same theme recurred in several later watercolors, such as *The Insect Men Are Coming* of about 1945, in which the world is overrun by a horde of little creatures with lumpy bodies and stick-like legs, surmounted by half-human heads. Still another source of the Stickmen were letters which reached the artist from Germany after



PEACE, II. 1946. Oil. $47 \times 33\frac{1}{4}$. Whitney Museum of American Art.

the war describing near starvation and the waking dreams that hunger created. A German mother, says Grosz, might tell her family a conventional fairy-tale in which the giant or ogre was involuntarily replaced by the fat red figure of a man made entirely of ham or beefsteak. This is the subject of his watercolor *A Hunger Phantasy*, probably done early in 1947. The same ham-man appears in *Attacked by the Stickmen*, one of the first papers in the series proper, and it seems likely that the emaciated bodies of his attackers were partly inspired by the same hunger reports. In this interpretation the picture becomes an allegory of the ferocity and the hallucinations bred by actual, physical starvation. On a more philosophical level, it can be read as a conflict between barbarism and an over-effete civilization—a further distillation of the fat-thin motif in *The Ambassador of Goodwill*.

For some two years Grosz's imagination was obsessed with this nightmare land and its strange inhabitants. The legend that he had begun to invent with the earlier oils now flowered into a complex structure that is both symbolical of war and a reflection of the artist's Gothic delight in his half-mad brain children. For a short time these implacable gremlins continued to pursue their helpless fat man, rejecting his offer of cigarettes in *From the Town beyond the River* and finally crucifying and dissecting him in the ghastly watercolor of *The Tortured Ham* with its restless, almost abstract design that suggests the

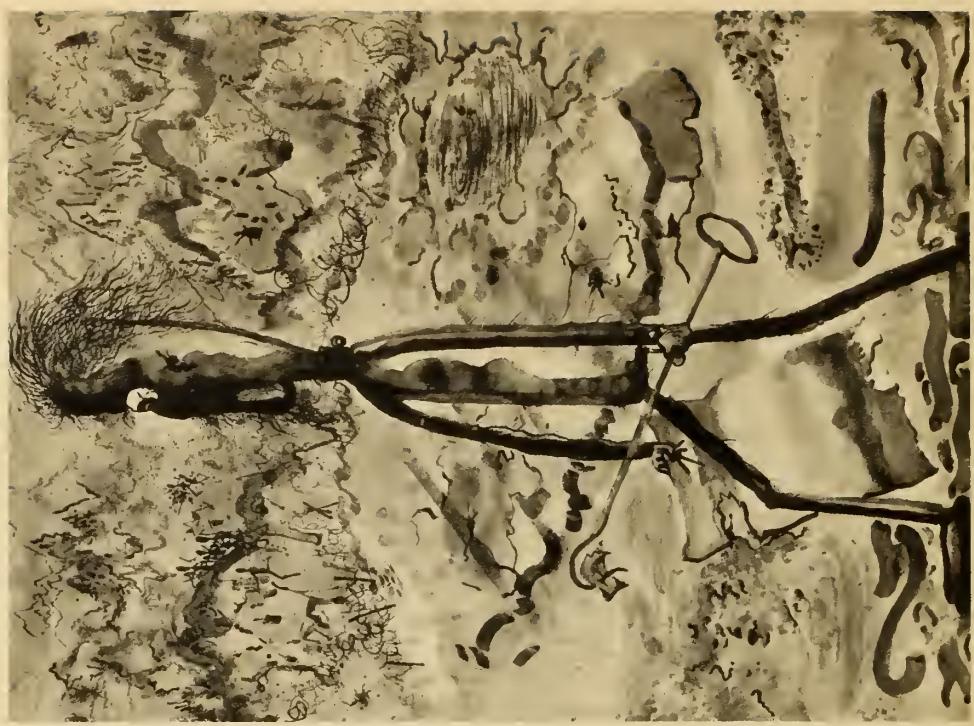


THE TORTURED HAM. 1947-48. Watercolor. 23×16. Associated American Artists Galleries.

Opposite: ATTACKED BY THE STICKMEN. c. 1947. Watercolor. 18×23. Associated American Artists Galleries.

drilling, sawing motion of the executioners. Moving on from this theme, Grosz clarified his concept in *Corpus Delicti*. The typical Stickman now emerges as a hairy creature who seems to bristle with constant rage. His head is several times too large for his insect-like body, his eye bulges from its socket, rolling wildly. His emaciated figure is shaded heavily on one side, very lightly on the other, giving the impression of an empty shell—an effect that is heightened in other pictures by cracks or holes which reveal his hollow interior or his exceptionally small brains. He is a child of the iron age, wearing an iron collar, carrying iron weapons and inhabiting a gray country wreathed in barbed wire. This colorless land of mud and cracked earth is partly, Grosz says, a symbol of Marxism, although it is not clear to what extent the concept was in his mind when he painted the series. In the present paper, the central figure has just discovered a tattered rag or banner painted with the prismatic hues of the rainbow. He has torn it fiercely with his hook, for these are forbidden colors in his country. From their caves and holes in the hills, his compatriots swarm like curious ants to see what he has found. Again the drama can be interpreted on a purely human level, on a political level or simply as Stickman mythology. To the artist it was doubtless all of these. In any case, the theme of the rainbow flag runs through a large part of the series. In *They Found Something* the banner has been spitted on





CORPUS DELICTI, 1947-48, Watercolor, $23\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$.
Associated American Artists Galleries.



WAVING THE FLAG, 1947-48, Watercolor, 25×18 .
Associated American Artists Galleries.

a long iron corkscrew by a Stickman who carries it, like an obscene object, through a ruined city. In the *Enemy of the Rainbow* and the later oil of the same subject, *The Sentry*, it is held by a Stick-soldier who guards a desolate concentration camp surrounded by high wire fences. In *Forbidden Colors* and the *Rainbow Fiend* (another watercolor-oil pair), it takes the form of an artist's canvas which has been slashed by the same furious sentry.

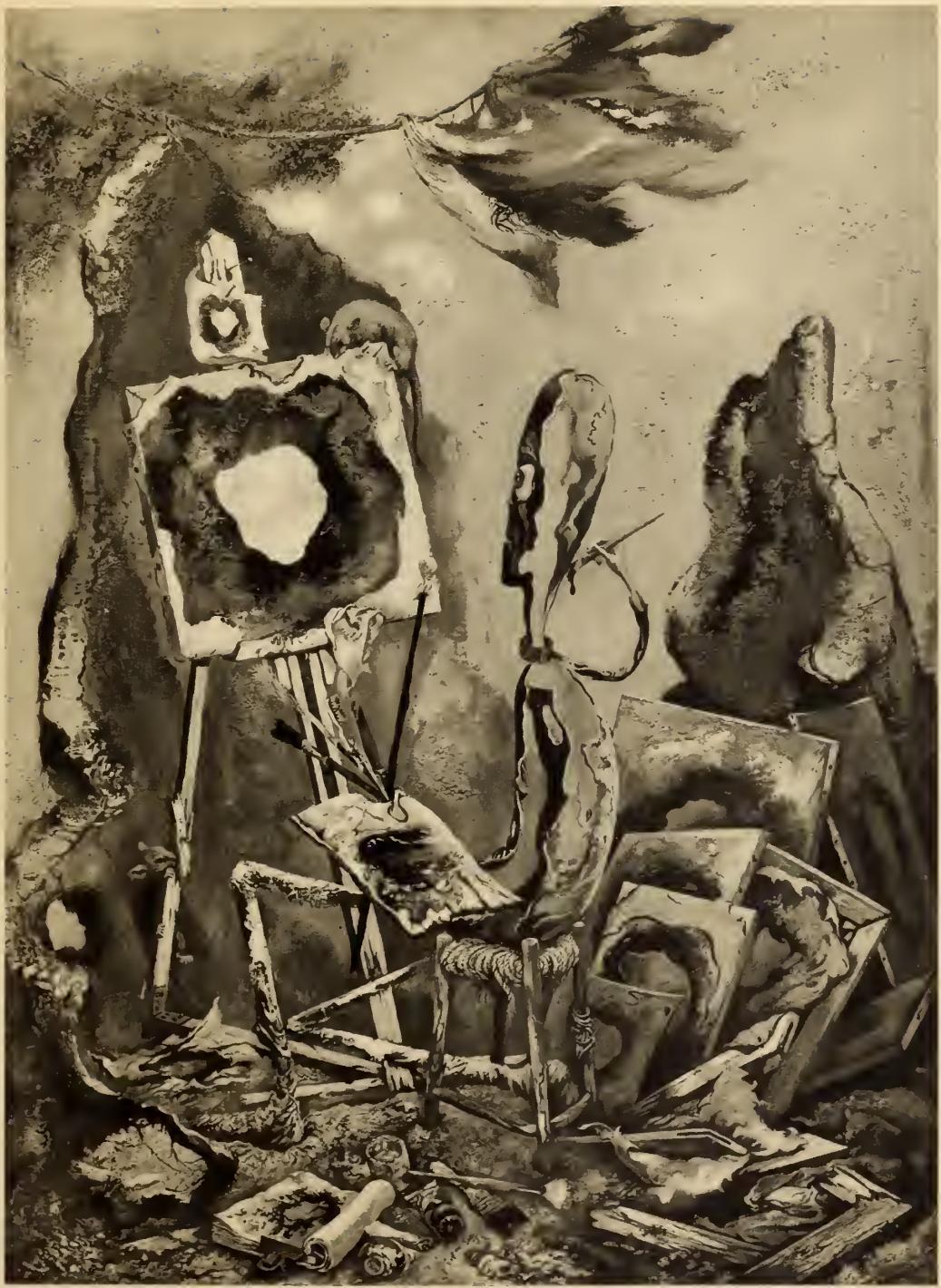
The Stickmen have their own banner, too, a colorless gray-brown rag without device which is raised fanatically at the head of their army in *The Invasion*. The figure of the flag-bearer in this picture became the subject of perhaps the most powerful watercolor in the whole series, *Waving the Flag*. In discussing this, Grosz notes that it started as a concentrated symbol of nihilism, influenced to some extent by his reading of Kafka and the existentialists; it was also an attempt to make more universal the attack of his early caricatures, not by documenting the evils of war, as he had done in Germany, but rather by creating a symbolic figure which would embody the whole insane fanaticism of the warmakers. But in painting it the artist was carried away by the sheer force of his brush, by the coiling lines that writhe around the body, the violent diagonal composition with its fluttering counter-movement in the wind-swept banner and hair. Half-consciously his mind returned to the expressive gestures of Renaissance art, like those of a somewhat similar figure in Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*. In a strange way, Western tradition and the pure excitement of painting combined to make the picture more a symbol of heroic defiance than of futility.

From the beginning, the Stickmen tended to turn into painters and musicians. In 1947, Grosz seated one of them at an easel among rat-infested ruins, where he works intently on a large picture of a hole while other canvases of the same subject are scattered about his feet. He "believed once in a picture," Grosz explains, "but now there is only a hole without meaning, without anything . . . nothingness. . . ." and this is also the man's self portrait. Perhaps *The Painter of the Hole* is George Grosz, too, or at least that part of him which, from time to time, has looked at both art and life with a profound pessimism. In any case, the subject fascinated him and he did it over and over, developing a more elaborate symbolism as he worked. In *The Fiddler* he varied the theme, making his artist a musician, but the music is still a hole. In the watercolor *Uprooted* the painter's head is also pierced by a ragged opening; he is himself the hole as well as its portrayer. In this version root tendrils spring from his feet and the handle of his brush—probably a reference to Grosz's expatriation and a motif that recurs in other pictures. Finally in two oil versions, *The Painter of the Hole, I* and *II*, the artist's figure becomes a mere shell; in the second of these the hole itself, though still an obsessive illusion, is perhaps the most real object present, for a rat crawls through it. With the latter, painted in 1949, the series was nearly over. In one more canvas, *The Gray Man Dances*, Grosz made a kind of synthesis of all the themes of the preceding two years and of some that go back earlier. The grotesque figure is part Stickman, part hollow shell; his ears are plugged like those of the poets in *The Mighty One* and in addition his mouth is sewn shut; the painting-of-the-hole is now a pierced

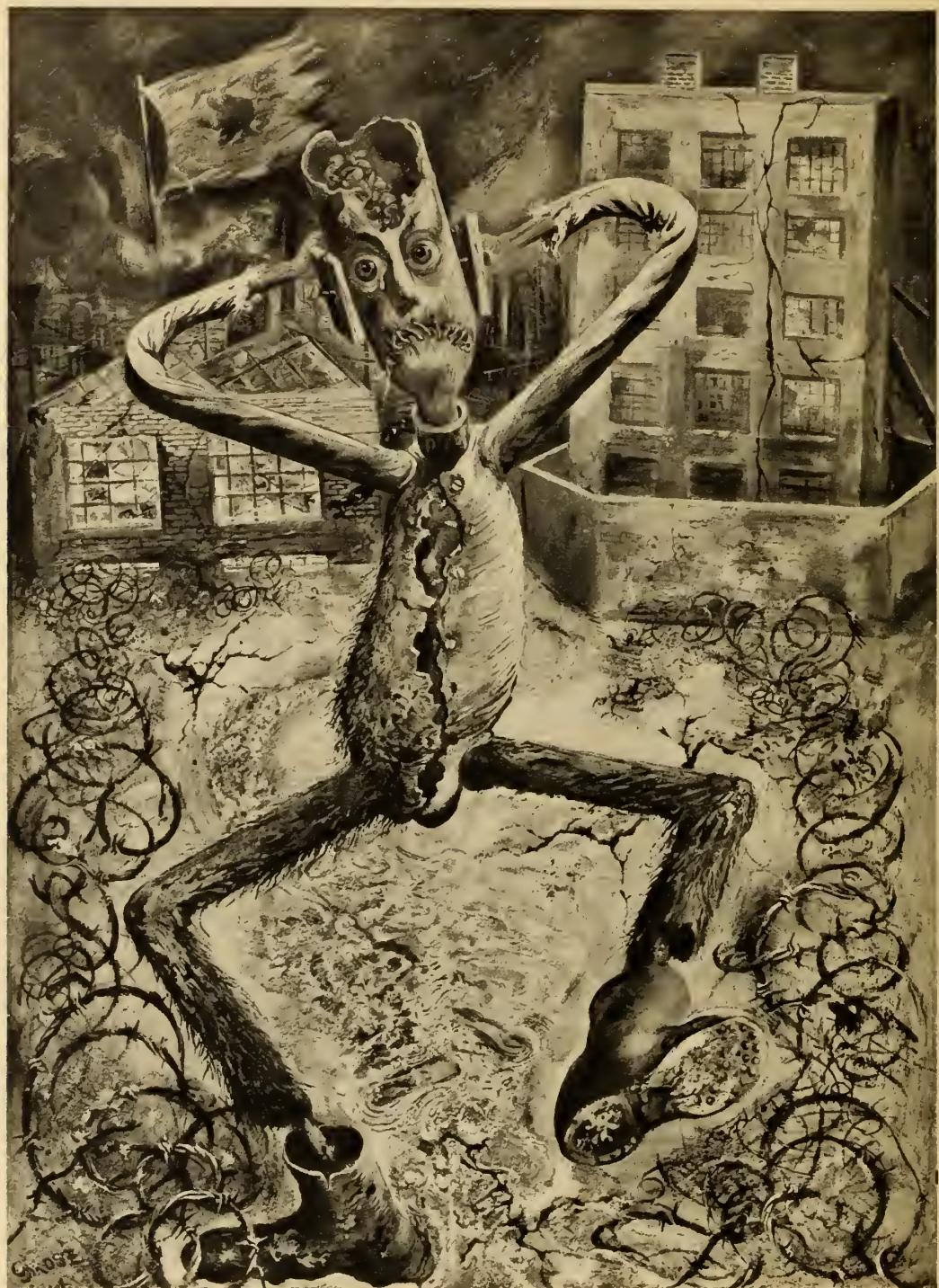
banner flying above a burning city reminiscent of the war pictures. A strange note of pathos, entirely absent from the earlier work, has crept in. It speaks from the sad, quite human eyes and even from the tightly laced mouth. It is perhaps most clearly expressed in the dance, so unlike the fierce antics of the Stickmen and suggesting, rather, an involuntary spasm that is both ridiculous and pitiful. Grosz said farewell to his warped and battered children on a note of deep compassion.

In the five years since then a vein of relaxation, varied by occasional experiment, has run through much of Grosz's work. His watercolors, like *Reed* and *Driftwood* of 1952, are flatter and more decorative than any he has done before, sometimes almost abstract in their sensitively wrought patterns though always related to the forms and movements of nature. He has also tried a semi-abstract style in a few oils, of which the best is perhaps his *Nightmare* of 1950. This is one of the few war subjects of the late period and was intended as an emotional symbol of mixed memories, including those of his mother. Painted in swirling reds and yellows, it shows great technical dexterity in the handling, which varies from thin washes of poisonous intensity to very rich, heavy passages. But Grosz does not seem entirely at home in this form of expression and has not, for the moment, pursued it further. In another experiment of 1950, he painted two watercolors, one entirely in red, the other entirely in blue. *Defiance* resumes the uprooted theme of the Stickman series but here the figure is more stylized and angular; both the use of red (as the color of rage) and the fierce diagonals are apparently symbolic of the expatriate's angry rejection of his old environment. Closely related, *Escape* also deals with the refugee but the amorphous figure with its fluttering clothes and trailing roots creates a mood of fear which is reinforced by the writhing pattern of the swamp foliage; the blue, Grosz says, is a symbol of hope. Both papers are more abstract than his earlier work but they grow logically out of it and retain the concrete image which seems so important an element in his creative process. Both were also intended as studies for larger oils, which he has never undertaken. Instead he has returned, for the most part, to the pleasant landscapes, the nudes and still lifes that have always given him so much peace of mind in the making. He likes to keep these by him as long as possible, often for three or four years, building up and enriching their surfaces. *Still Life on the Beach* was virtually finished in 1950 but as late as 1953 the artist was still making minor changes, altering the skyline to create a more "floating, in and out rhythm," bringing up a highlight to get a subtler play of hard and soft textures. To Grosz this final process is pure joy; capturing the first conception on canvas is hard work, sometimes even "a little disagreeable," but the "basketwork" at the end is the artist's personal reward. In Grosz's case it is also an ever present danger, for the richness of these last effects can, on occasion, come perilously close to cloying.

During the last five years, Grosz has busied himself in many ways. He has continued to hold classes both at the League and in his own studio and is an exceptionally able teacher. Many students used to come to him in the expectation of finding an easy short cut to caricature but they soon discovered that he insists on rigorous draftsmanship and



THE PAINTER OF THE HOLE, I. 1948. Oil. 30×22. Associated American Artists Galleries.



THE GRAY MAN DANCES. 1949. Oil. 30×22. Associated American Artists Galleries.

a thorough study of anatomy and perspective. He is unusually skillful in imparting technical knowledge and has compiled several imaginative scrapbooks which he uses as visual aids in analyzing forms and textures. With his more advanced students he likes to discuss ornament and abstract organization, making many references to the old masters, whom he continues to study with enthusiasm and an unusually catholic taste.

In May of 1950 the Grosz's made a long trip to Europe, revisiting Germany for the first time since their flight in 1933. It was a curious experience. Grosz went in a holiday mood. Recalling his youthful admiration of American tourists (and perhaps because he has always enjoyed dressing well), he equipped himself with the most expensive American clothes, including a fine flannel suit and a dark straw hat with colored band. But in the grim atmosphere of Berlin the mood vanished abruptly and he fled to Switzerland and Italy. From Italy he went to Munich, which was better, but it was there, ironically, that he was mistaken for a native American and cheated in an exchange of marks for dollars. While he tells the story with a good deal of humor at his own expense, he seems to have returned to America with a soberer conviction that it was now his only home, even though a part of his heart remained deeply German.

This dichotomy Grosz has fully accepted; it has become an integral part of both his outlook and his art. But while the German and the American elements in his work have grown inextricably together, each has also been intensified by his expatriation. If Grosz had not been born abroad, America would not have had the tremendous impact on him that it did—an impact which has been both visual and spiritual with the latter by far the most important, changing him from a bitter satirist to an artist of deep humanity. And if Grosz had not spent long years in this country, he would scarcely have been so poignantly aware of his German heritage, on which he has drawn increasingly for both the Gothic form and the imaginative content of his best painting. Of course there is always a danger that the artist divided between two cultures will have a more superficial understanding of each than if he belonged unselfconsciously to a single land. Grosz has not always escaped this peril, particularly in the difficult years of adjustment after he first came here. But escape he did, partly by accepting the lot of the expatriate and making it the theme of some of his most moving paintings, perhaps even more by forgetting it entirely as he was swept away by those gruesome yet majestic visions of a universal holocaust. Indeed Grosz's finest work, both in Germany and in America, has been almost involuntary, the result of a genuine possession that has seized him, often against his will. In the interludes between these literally inspired periods, he has seemed to mark time, painting some remarkably good pictures but not one with the force or seriousness of which he is capable. Today he appears to be in such an interlude once more, waiting with a strange quietness for a theme that may well prove painful, as the war did, at the same time that it wrings his full powers out of him. Whether that theme arrives or not, he has already contributed to the art of our day some of its most compelling images of man's inhumanity to man.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

The arrangement is chronological. The dimensions are in inches, height preceding width. An asterisk indicates that the work is illustrated. Where the owner is not given the work has been lent by the Associated American Artists Galleries. The oils are on canvas unless otherwise noted. The dimensions of watercolors and drawings are sight.

Certain works are for sale. Prices will be furnished on request.

OILS

- *1 The Little Murderer. 1918. 26×26 .
- 2 Street Scene, Kurfürstendamm. 1925. 32×24 .
- *3 The Poet Max Hermann-Neisse. 1927. $23\frac{3}{8} \times 29\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by the Museum of Modern Art.
- 4 The Muckraker. 1937. 39×32 .
- 5 Street Fight. 1937. 25×36 .
- *6 The Blue Chair. 1938. 26×20 . Lent by the Roland P. Murdock Collection, Wichita Art Museum.
- *7 Landscape, Bornholm. 1938. $33 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hirshhorn.
- 8 A Piece of My World, I. c. 1938. 32×24 . Lent by the Newark Museum.
- *9 A Piece of My World, II. c. 1938. $39\frac{1}{2} \times 65$.
- *10 Self Portrait. 1938. $46\frac{1}{2} \times 33\frac{1}{4}$.
- *11 Approaching Storm. 1940. Composition board. $16\frac{1}{4} \times 20\frac{1}{4}$. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
- *12 I Was Always Present. 1942. 36×28 . Lent by the Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art.
- *13 I'm Glad I Came Back. 1942. Masonite. 28×20 . Lent by Arizona State College, Tempe.
- 14 The Mighty One Surprised by Two Poets. 1942. $30\frac{7}{8} \times 21\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by Mr. Arnott J. White.
- *15 Nude with Bath Towel. 1942. Masonite. 28×20 .
- *16 The Ambassador of Good Will. 1943. 27×33 . Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- 17 The Wanderer. 1943. 30×40 . Lent by the Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester.
- 18 Cain. 1944. 38×49 .
- 19 "The moon has set, and the Pleiades; it is the middle of the night and time passes, time passes, and I lie alone." 1944. $46\frac{1}{2} \times 33$. Lent by Mr. Adolph Tausik.
- *20 The Survivor. 1944. 31×39 . Lent by Mr. Marc J. Sandler.
- *21 Cape Cod Dunes. 1945. 12×33 .
- 22 It Haunts Me. 1945. $26 \times 21\frac{1}{2}$.
- *23 Peace, II. 1946. $47 \times 33\frac{1}{4}$. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
- *24 The Pit. 1946. $60\frac{1}{4} \times 37\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by the Roland P. Murdock Collection, Wichita Art Museum.
- 25 Nude in Dunes. c. 1947. Paper mounted on Masonite. $26\frac{1}{2} \times 21\frac{1}{2}$.
- 26 The Sentry. c. 1947. 27×18 .
- *27 The Painter of the Hole, I. 1948. 30×22 .
- 28 Rainbow Fiend. 1948. 27×18 .
- 29 The Upheaval of Nothingness. c. 1948. 25×33 .
- *30 The Gray Man Dances. 1949. Gesso panel. 30×22 .

- 31 The Painter of the Hole, II. 1949. Gesso panel. 28×20 .
- 32 Nightmare. 1950. 30×22 .
- 33 Still Life on the Beach. 1950-53. $23\frac{1}{4} \times 28\frac{1}{2}$.
- WATERCOLORS**
- *34 Furlough. 1917. $18\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{5}{8}$.
- *35 The Engineer Heartfield. 1920. Watercolor and collage. 16×11 . Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, gift of General A. Conger Goodyear.
- *36 Design for Theatrical Dummy in Iwan Goll's *Methusalem*. 1922. $20\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{3}{4}$.
- 37 Berlin Street. 1928. 19×27 .
- 38 Thunderbeard, a Man with Opinion. 1928. $23\frac{1}{2} \times 18$.
- 39 The Last Bottle. c. 1930. $24\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by Mr. Arnott J. White.
- 40 Couple. 1933. $17\frac{3}{4} \times 23$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 41 In Central Park. 1933. 25×18 . Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 42 Man with a Dog. 1933. $18\frac{1}{2} \times 25\frac{3}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 43 New York Types. 1933. $24 \times 16\frac{5}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- *44 Street Scene. 1933. $23 \times 18\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 45 Brotherly Love. 1934. $20\frac{1}{2} \times 27\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University.
- *46 Couple. 1934. $25\frac{1}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
- 47 Heads. c. 1934. 24×18 .
- 48 The Menace. 1934. $21\frac{3}{4} \times 16$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 49 New York Harbor. c. 1934. 25×18 . Lent by Mrs. E. S. Herrmann.
- 50 Punishment. 1934. $27\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 51 Street Fight. 1934. 18×23 .
- 52 This Burning World. 1934. $17 \times 21\frac{3}{4}$. Lent by the Cleveland Museum of Art, Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection.
- *53 After the Questioning. 1935. $17\frac{1}{4} \times 22\frac{3}{4}$. Lent by Mr. Arnott J. White.
- 54 Shoeshine. c. 1935. $23\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis.
- 55 Sunset. 1935. $18\frac{5}{8} \times 14\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis.
- *56 Central Park at Night. 1936. Watercolor and gouache. 18×12 . Lent by the Art Institute of Chicago.
- *57 End of the World. 1936. Watercolor and gouache. $12\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 58 The Muckraker. 1936. 24×17 . Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 59 No Let-up. 1936. 24×18 . Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis.
- 60 Reading His Paper. c. 1936. $23\frac{5}{8} \times 16\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 61 The Red Sun. 1936. $18\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. Arnott J. White.
- *62 The Fat and the Thin. 1937. $18\frac{3}{8} \times 24$.
- 63 Across the Lake. 1939. 19×13 . Lent by the Brooklyn Museum.
- 64 Cape Cod. 1939. $22 \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 65 Cape Cod Still Life. c. 1939. $19\frac{1}{8} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 66 Dunes, Cape Cod. 1939. 13×17 . Lent by Mr. Arnott J. White.
- 67 The Insect Men Are Coming. c. 1945. $24 \times 17\frac{1}{4}$.
- *68 Attacked by the Stickmen. c. 1947. 18×23 .
- 69 A Hunger Phantasy. c. 1947. 24×18 .
- 70 The Painter of the Hole. 1947. $23\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

- *71 Corpus Delicti. 1947-48. $23\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$.
- 72 Enemy of the Rainbow. 1947-48. 24×17 .
- 73 The Fiddler. 1947-48. $24\frac{1}{4} \times 17$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 74 From the Town beyond the River. 1947-48. 19×25 .
- 75 The Invasion. 1947-48. 18×24 . Lent by the Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art.
- 76 They Found Something. 1947-48. 24×17 .
- *77 The Tortured Ham. 1947-48. 23×16 .
- 78 Uprooted. 1947-48. $35\frac{1}{4} \times 27\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University.
- *79 Waving the Flag. 1947-48. 25×18 .
- 80 Defiance. 1950. $18\frac{5}{8} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$.
- 81 Escape. 1950. $14\frac{3}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{8}$.
- 82 New York. 1950. $13\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$. Lent by Mr. Julius Steiner.
- 83 United Nations. 1951. 20×30 . Lent by Mr. Wolfram L. Ertlinger.
- 84 Driftwood. 1952. $18\frac{7}{8} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$.
- 85 Reed. 1952. $23\frac{3}{4} \times 18$.
- of Modern Art, A. Conger Goodyear Fund.
- 90 Hothouse. 1918. Pen and ink. $7\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$.
- 91 Karl Liebknecht. 1919. Brush and ink. 24×16 . Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 92 Vampire. 1919. Pen and ink. $24 \times 16\frac{5}{8}$.
- *93 The White General. 1919. Brush and ink. $20\frac{3}{4} \times 19$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 94 Bringing Them into Conformity. 1920. Pen and ink. $25\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{3}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- *95 The Uncle. c. 1921. Pen and ink. $24\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{3}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 96 Undressing. 1921. Pen and ink. $23 \times 15\frac{3}{4}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 97 The Lord's Prayer. 1922. Pen and ink. $20\frac{7}{8} \times 16$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 98 Charwoman. 1924. Pencil. $24\frac{3}{4} \times 19$. Lent by the Brooklyn Museum.
- 99 Seated Girl. c. 1926. Pencil. $21\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by the Weyhe Gallery.
- 100 Last Call. 1931. Pen and brush. $23\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 101 Nude. 1934. Chalk and sanguine. $22 \times 12\frac{1}{4}$.
- 102 My Son Martin in Bed with Mumps. 1935. Pencil. $14\frac{3}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by the artist.
- 103 Peter. 1935. Pencil. $24\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by the artist.
- 104 Reeds and Grasses. 1935. Pen and ink. $18\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{7}{8}$. Lent by Mrs. E. S. Herrmann.
- 105 Rocks at Bornholm. 1935. Pen and wash. 18×14 .
- 106 Draped Dummy. 1936. Wolff pencil. 24×18 .

DRAWINGS

- *86 Café. 1909. Pencil. $9\frac{3}{8} \times 9$.
- 87 Pandemonium. 1914. Brush and ink. $18\frac{1}{8} \times 11\frac{7}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis.
- *88 After It Was Over They Played Cards. 1917. Pen and ink. $9\frac{3}{8} \times 12$.
- 89 Fit for Active Service. 1918. Pen and brush. $14\frac{5}{8} \times 13\frac{3}{8}$. Lent by the Museum

- 107 I Was Always Present. 1936. Brush and ink. $22\frac{1}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 108 Sandpit. c. 1936. Pen and ink. $14\frac{3}{4} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by Mrs. E. S. Herrmann.
- *109 Study from Dummy. 1936. Pencil. $23\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$.
- *110 The Survivor. 1936. Pen and ink. $19\frac{1}{8} \times 25$. Lent by the Art Institute of Chicago, gift of the Print and Drawing Club.
- *111 Tree. 1937. Pen and ink. $18\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 112 Venus and Adonis after Rubens. 1938. Wolff pencil. $23\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{5}{8}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 113 Dunes at Truro. 1939. Chalk and colored wash. $14\frac{1}{2} \times 19$. Lent by Mr. E. B. Ashton.
- 114 Dunes at Truro. 1939. Wolff pencil. $13\frac{7}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$.
- 115 Leaves of Grass. 1939. Pen and ink. $22\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by Mrs. E. S. Herrmann.
- *116 Dunes at Wellfleet. 1940. Wolff pencil and wash. $12\frac{5}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$.
- 117 End of a Tree. 1940. Pen and wash. $15\frac{1}{8} \times 19\frac{5}{8}$.
- 118 Tree. c. 1940. Ink and wash. $21\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- *119 Nude. 1941. Pencil. $23\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn.
- 120 Trees. 1949. Pen and wash. 15×19 . Lent by Mrs. Pegeen Sullivan Robinson.

NOTE: Nos. 2, 5-7, 14, 16, 25, 29, 35, 38-42, 52-55, 58, 59, 61, 63, 66, 69, 83, 87, 90-92, 94, 96-101, 105, 108, 112-115, 117, 118 and 120 are being shown at the Whitney Museum but not at the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, The Pasadena Art Institute or the San Francisco Museum of Art.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1893 July 26: born Berlin, Germany, son of Prussian Lutheran parents, Carl and Marie (Schultze) Grosz.
- 1898 To Stolp, Pomerania with parents.
- 1900 Death of father. Moved to Berlin with mother and sisters.
- 1902 Returned to Stolp with family. Attended Oberrealschule; studied art there, also with a local decorator.
- 1909 To Dresden. Enrolled in Royal Saxon Academy of the Fine Arts. Studied under professors Richard Müller, Osmar Schindler, Robert Sterl and Raphael Wehle.
- 1910 First caricature in *linienstil* sold to *Ulk*, supplement of the *Berliner Tageblatt*.
- 1911 Spring: to Berlin. Entered the Royal Arts and Crafts School; received scholarship in the fall. Studied under Professor Emil Orlik. Began to paint in oil independently.
- 1913 Summer: first trip to Paris. Drew from model at Académie Colarossi. Began to sell drawings to *Ulk*, *Lustige Blätter* and other magazines. Influenced by the futurists in the "Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon," Berlin.
- 1914- Infantryman in German army. Discharged early 1916 after illness.
- 1916- Active in Berlin. Theodore Daubler's articles brought him fame. Assisted by the art patron Sally Falk. Met Eva Louise Peter.
- 1917 Drafted into army. Hospitalized after illness.
- 1918 Late fall: discharged from army. Settled in Berlin. Joined the German Dada movement. Made political speeches. Hans Goltz became his dealer; gave him his first one-man exhibition.

- 1919 Issued the magazines *Die Pleite*, 1919–24, with Wieland Herzfelde; *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*, with Franz Jung, and *Der blutige Ernst*, with Karl Einstein.
- 1919– Made theatrical appearances with the Neue Jugend (Dada) group.
- 1920 May 26: married Eva Louise Peter. Tried for attacking the Reichswehr in his portfolio *Gott mit Uns*; fined 5,000 marks. With John Heartfield put on skits and ran marionette theatre in the "Schall und Rauch," in basement of the Reinhardt Theatre. Designed his first stage sets for Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, directed by Max Reinhardt. Continued designing for theatre through 1930.
- 1920's Visited Dr. Felix Weil, a benefactor, in Italy.
- 1922 Made a six months' trip to Russia via the Scandinavian countries with the writer, Martin Anderson Nexö.
- 1923 Tried for defaming public morals in his *Ecce Homo*. Offending plates removed. Fined 6,000 marks. About this time Alfred Flechtheim became his dealer.
- 1924 Trip to Paris.
- 1926 A son, Peter, born.
- 1927 Trip to France.
- 1928 Summer: Switzerland. December: tried for blasphemy in his portfolio *Hintergrund* (drawings for Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schwejk*). Fined 2,000 marks; judgment later reversed.
- 1930 A son, Martin, born.
- 1931 Awarded Watson F. Blair Purchase Prize, Art Institute of Chicago. January: First one-man exhibition of watercolors and drawings in U.S. at Weyhe Gallery, N.Y.
- 1932 Spring: to New York to teach at the Art Students League. Did illustrations for *Americana*, edited by Alexander King and Gilbert Seldes, through November 1933. October: returned to Germany.
- 1933 January: to New York with his wife. Rented a house at 40–41 221st Street, Bayside, L.I. Spring: with Maurice Sterne opened art school at 40 East 49th Street, J. B. Neumann director. Summer: Mrs. Grosz brought their children from Germany. Worked in watercolor, chiefly New York subjects. Taught at Art Students League seasons of 1933–36; 1940–42; 1943–44; 1950–53; summers, 1932, 1933, 1949, 1950.
- 1934 Spring: Sterne-Grosz school moved to Squibb Building with Grosz as director and only instructor, through Spring 1937.
- 1935 June–October: to Europe, visiting France, Holland, England and Denmark.
- 1936 Moved to 202 Shore Road, Douglaston, L.I. Started to work in oil again. Spent summer at Cape Cod, also summers of 1937–42, 1944–45, at Hyannis, Truro and Wellfleet.
- 1937 Awarded Guggenheim fellowship; renewed in 1938. Included in "Degenerate Art" exhibition in Munich.
- 1938 March: deprived of German citizenship. November 29: received final U.S. citizenship papers.
- 1940 Awarded Watson F. Blair Purchase Prize, Art Institute of Chicago, and Carol H. Beck Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
- 1941– Taught at School of Fine Arts, Columbia University.
- 1942 Summer: Garnet Lake, Adirondacks, N.Y.
- 1943 Summer: Garnet Lake, Adirondacks, N.Y.
- 1945 Awarded Second Prize, Carnegie Institute.
- 1946 Moved to The Cottage, Hilaire Farm, Huntington, L.I.
- 1950 May–October: to Europe, visiting France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Holland.
- 1952 May–June: Dallas, Texas; painted series of oils and watercolors, "Impressions of Dallas," commissioned by A. Harris & Co.
- One-man exhibitions:* 1931: Weyhe Gallery, N.Y. 1933: An American Group, N.Y.; Raymond & Raymond, N.Y.; Arts Club of Chicago; Crillon Galleries, Phila.; Milwaukee Art Institute. 1934: Mayor Gallery, London. 1935: An American Place, N.Y.; Contempora Art Circle Galleries, N.Y.; Germanic Museum, Harvard University. 1936: Leicester Galleries, London; Municipal University of Omaha. 1938: Art Institute of Chicago. 1939: Walker Galleries, N.Y. (Mar. & Oct.); Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, N.H. 1941: Walker Galleries, N.Y.; Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. (also circulated 1941–42); Associated American Artists Galleries, N.Y., also 1943, 1946 and 1948. 1943: Denver Art Museum. 1944: Baltimore Museum of Art. 1949: Germanic Museum, Harvard University; Print Club of Cleveland. 1950: Cleveland Institute of Art; Swetzoff Gallery, Boston. 1952: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts.

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The place of publication of books is New York unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations: Ag August, Ap April, bibl bibliography, D December, ed edited, F February, il illustration(s), incl including, Ja January, Je June, Jl July, mag magazine, Mr March, My May, N November, O October, p page(s), pl plate(s), rev review, S September.

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PERIODICALS: contributed illustrations during 1930's to *Americana*, *Art Front*, *Esquire*, *Fortune*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Nation*, *New Masses* and *Vanity Fair*.

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